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Cover A

MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE #1

OF 8



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MICHAEL
TURNER
G. R. R.

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MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE™

**"MAGICAL
THINKING"**

Volume Seven :: **PART 1 of 8**

Written by:

**J.T.
Krul**

In 2003, to mark the launch of his own publishing studio, Aspen Comics, Michael Turner put pencil to paper and went about creating a whole new world—a source of light in a strong female warrior, a source of dark in a monstrous mechanical dragon, and a source of power in the form of a seemingly ordinary boy who is anything but. Quickly joining the mega-hit Fathom, Soulfire has become one of Aspen's flagship properties, still going strong fifteen years later.

In the future, the world is dominated by technology, and an ancient power is on the verge of making a big comeback. The magic inherent in the universe has been dormant for centuries, but all that may change if a special spirit, a unique soul in the form of a boy named Malikai, can fulfill his destiny as the spark to bring about the next great age of magic!

Pencils & Inks by:

**Chahine
Ladjouze**

Digital Inks by:

**Mark Roslan
& Justice**

Color Art by:

**Wes
Hartman**

Lettering by:

Zen



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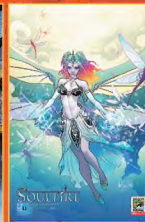
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SOME PEOPLE GO
THROUGH THEIR
ENTIRE LIVES IN
THE DARK.

THE HIMALAYAS, CENTRAL ASIA.

YEAR 2214.

AFRAID TO
OPEN THEIR EYES.
AFRAID TO LOOK
INTO THE LIGHT.

IT'S NOT THE
UNKNOWN
THEY FEAR.

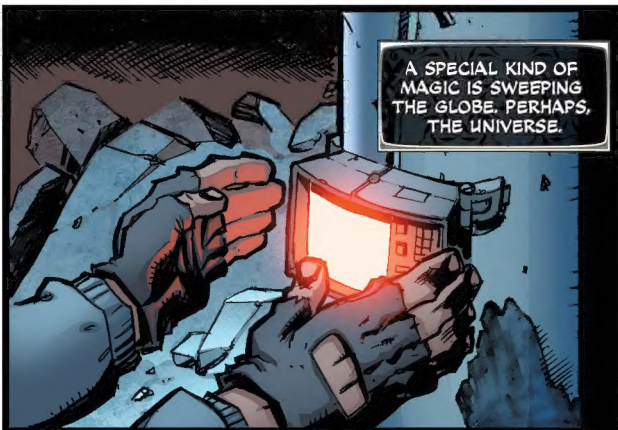
BUT RATHER, THEY
FEAR LEARNING A
TERRIBLE TRUTH. THAT
THEY ARE UNWORTHY.



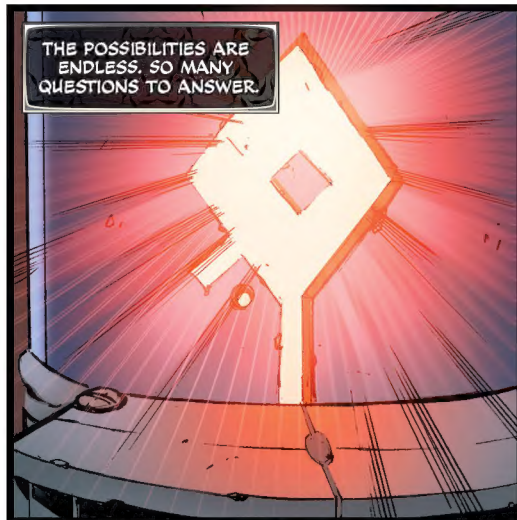
LUCKY FOR ME,
I'VE NEVER HAD
THAT PROBLEM.



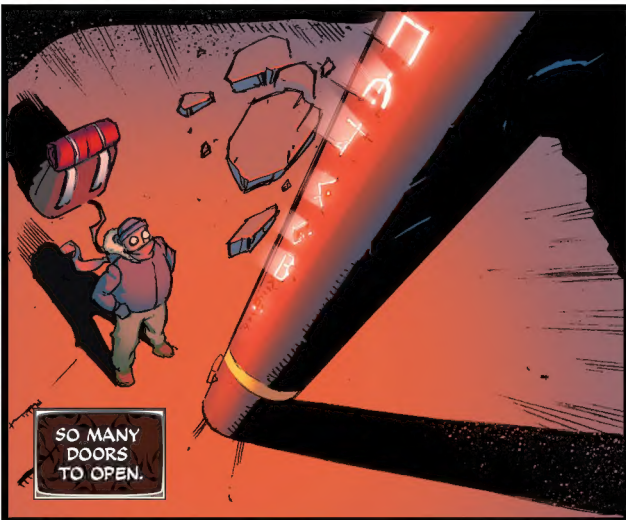
IT'S A BRAVE
NEW WORLD WE
FIND OURSELVES
LIVING IN NOW.



A SPECIAL KIND OF
MAGIC IS SWEEPING
THE GLOBE. PERHAPS,
THE UNIVERSE.



THE POSSIBILITIES ARE
ENDLESS. SO MANY
QUESTIONS TO ANSWER.

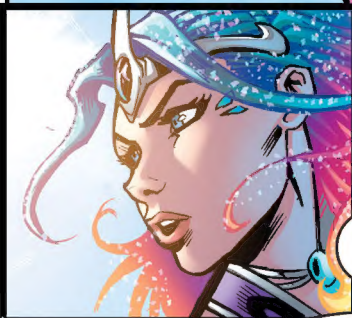
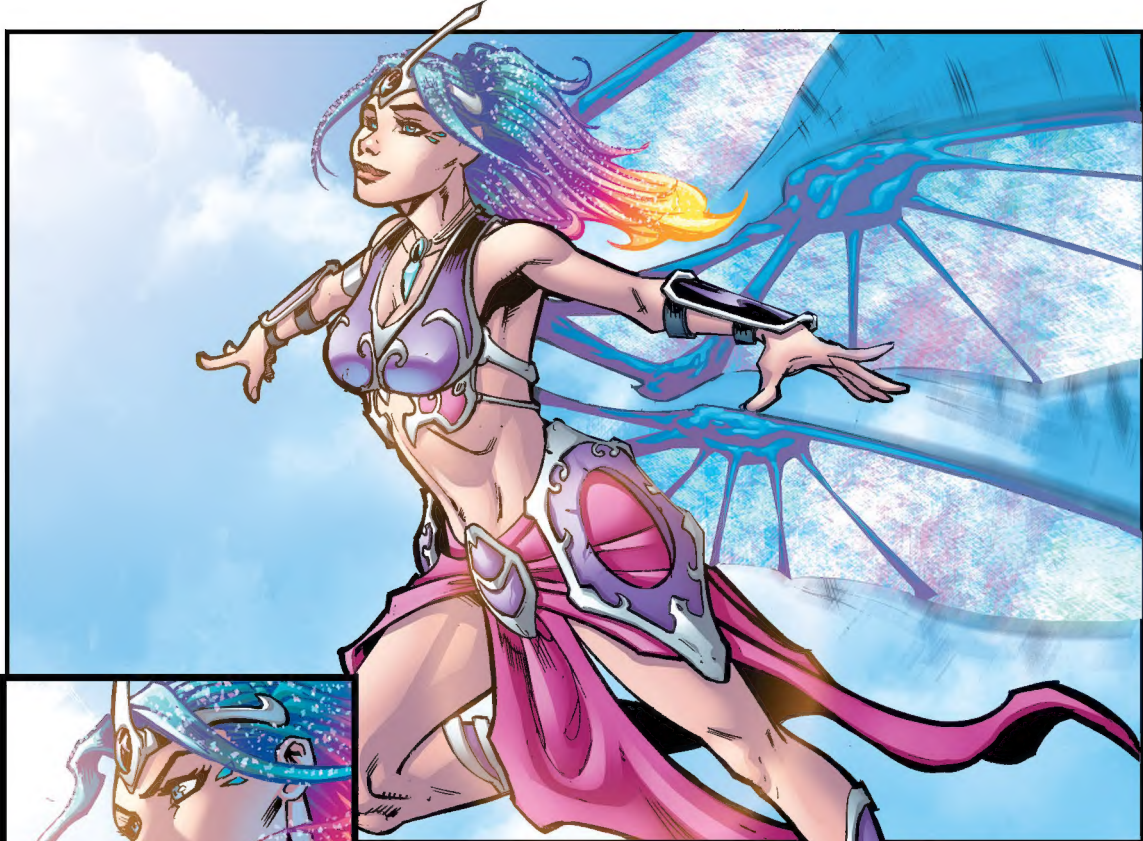


SO MANY
DOORS
TO OPEN.



AND, IF FATE HASN'T
SEEN FIT TO GIVE
ME THE KEYS...

...I'M MORE THAN
HAPPY TO MAKE
MY OWN.



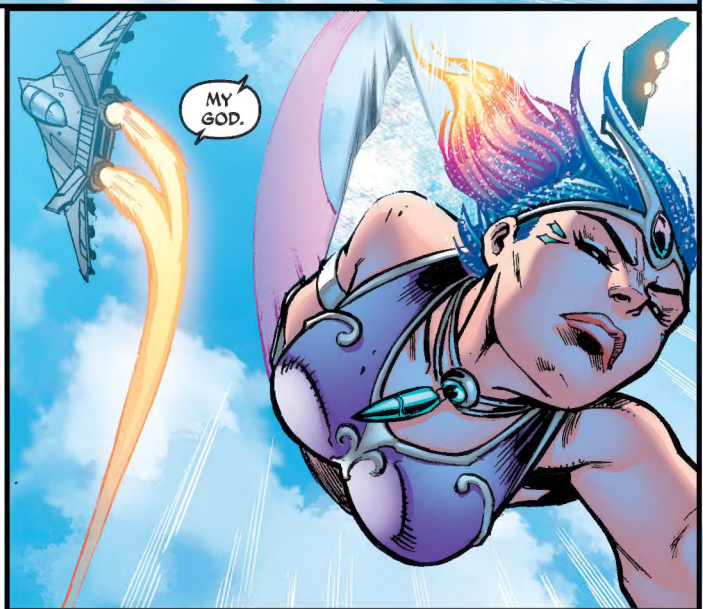
WHERE IS IT?
SAW IT COME
THIS WAY.



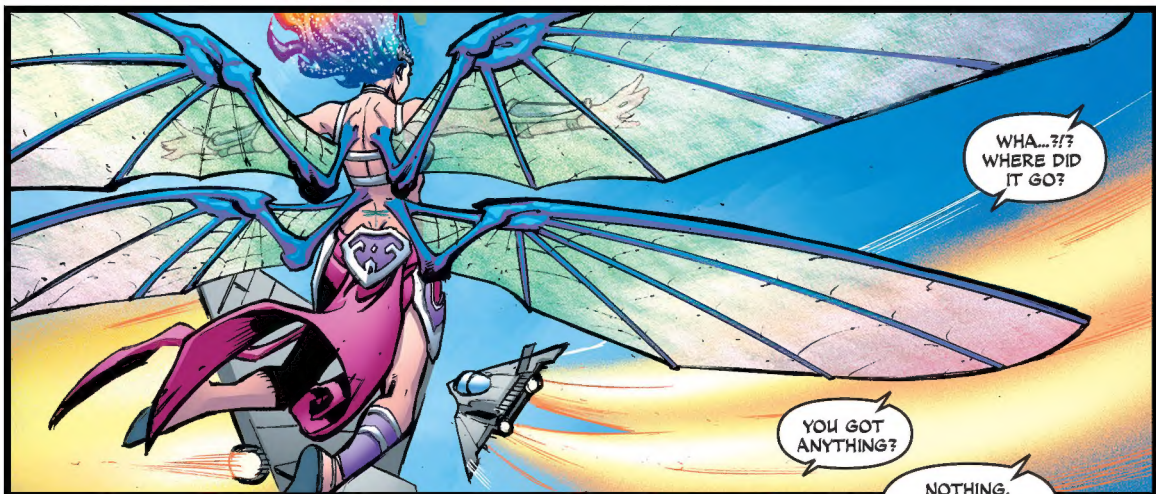
I'M STILL TRYING
TO FIGURE OUT WHAT
IT IS. HEAT SIGNATURE
IS SO FAINT. NOTHING
IS REGISTERING.

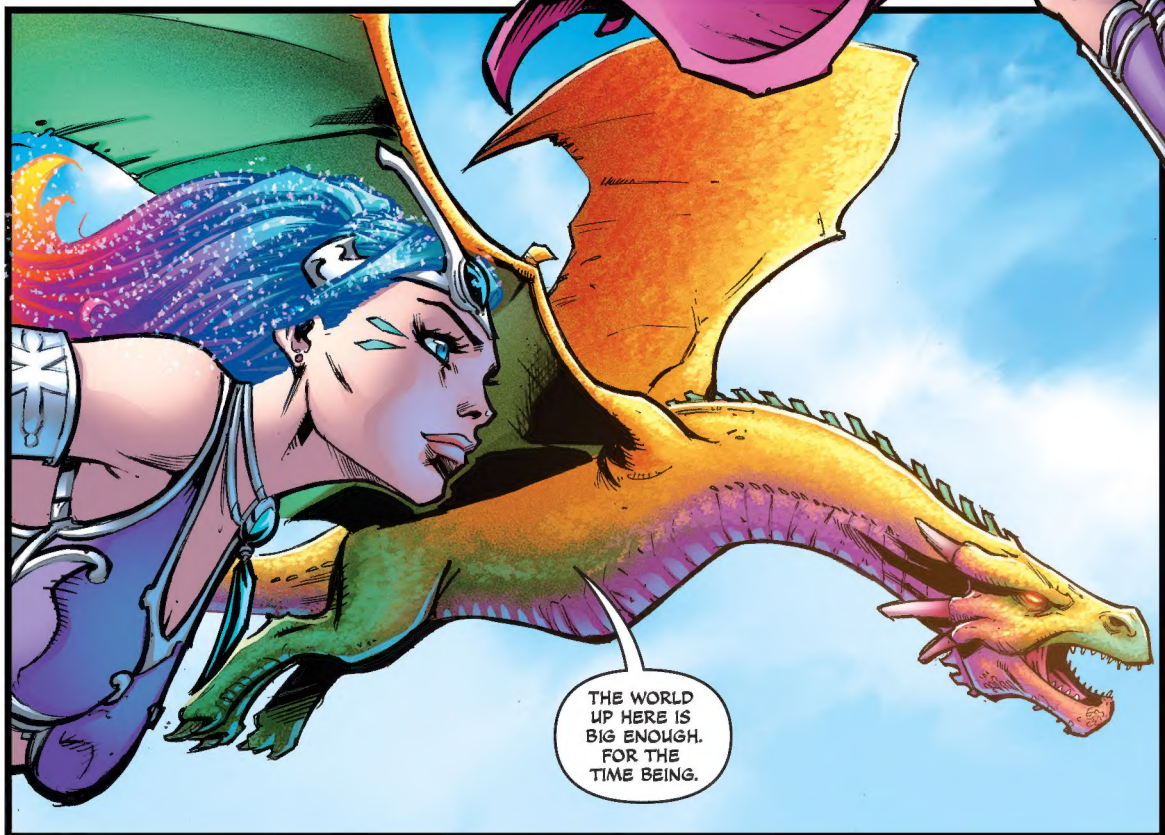
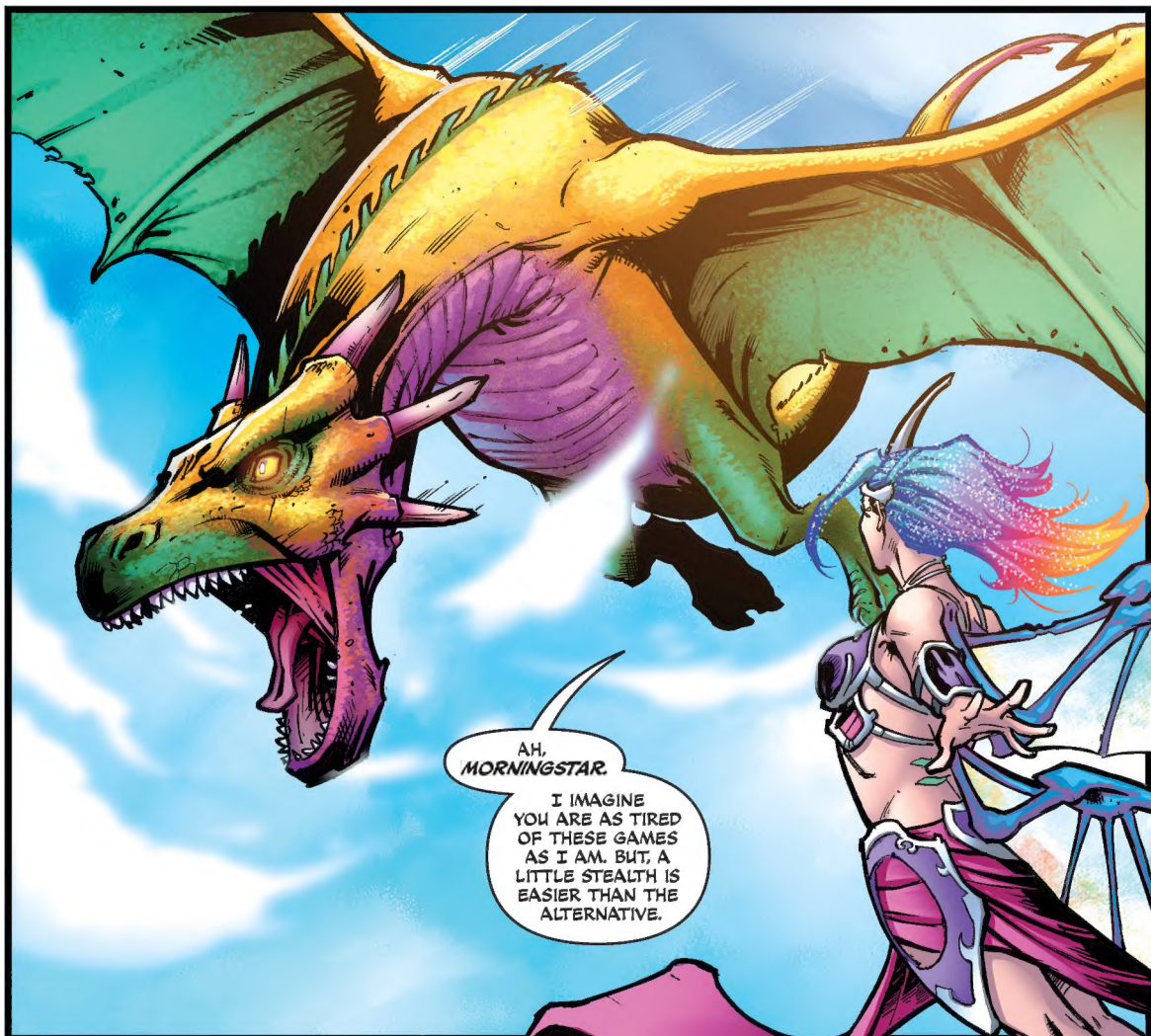


THERE!
TWELVE
O'CLOCK.



MY
GOD.







"IT'S NOT FAIR."



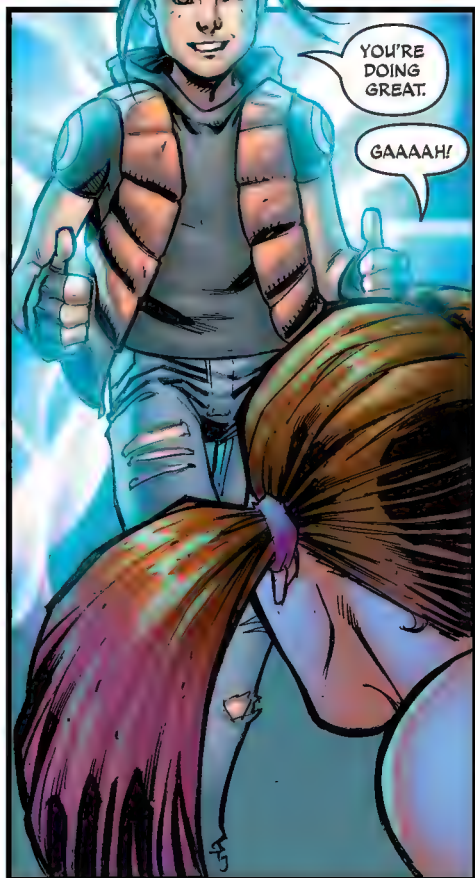
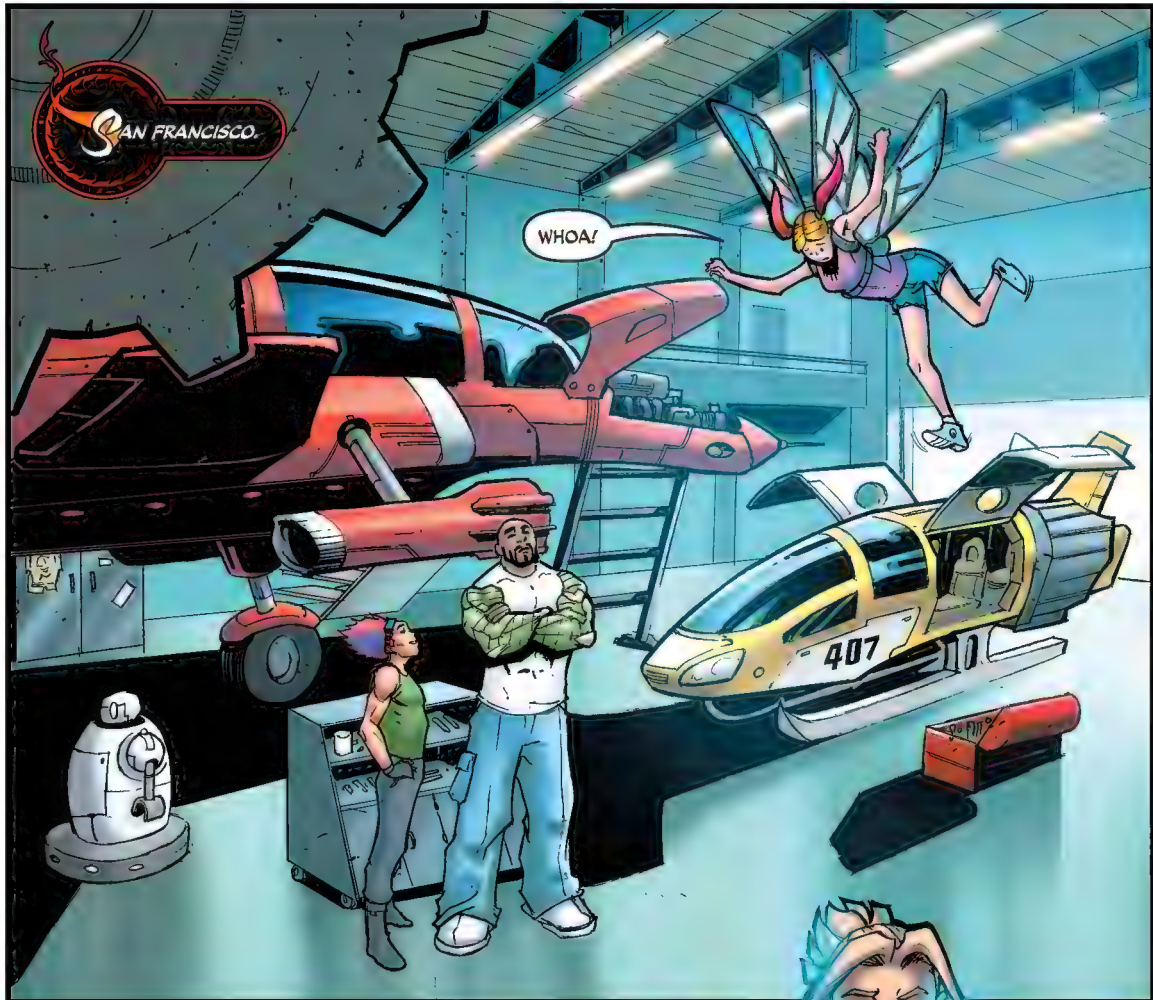
YOU SHOULD BE SOARING IN THE SKIES. WHENEVER AND WHEREVER YOU CARE.

THE SKIES TRULY BELONG TO YOU AND YOUR KIND. THE REST OF US ARE MERELY GUESTS. OFTEN, UNWELCOME ONES AT THAT, IT SEEMS.

THERE WILL COME A TIME, WHEN ALL THE WORLD WILL KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT THE MAGIC IN THIS UNIVERSE... AND THEN THEY WILL HAVE TO MAKE A CHOICE.



TO BE AFRAID... OR TO BE INSPIRED.





MALIKAI!
LOOK
OUT!

WAY
AHEAD OF
YOU.

AHHHH!!



YOU
OKAY?

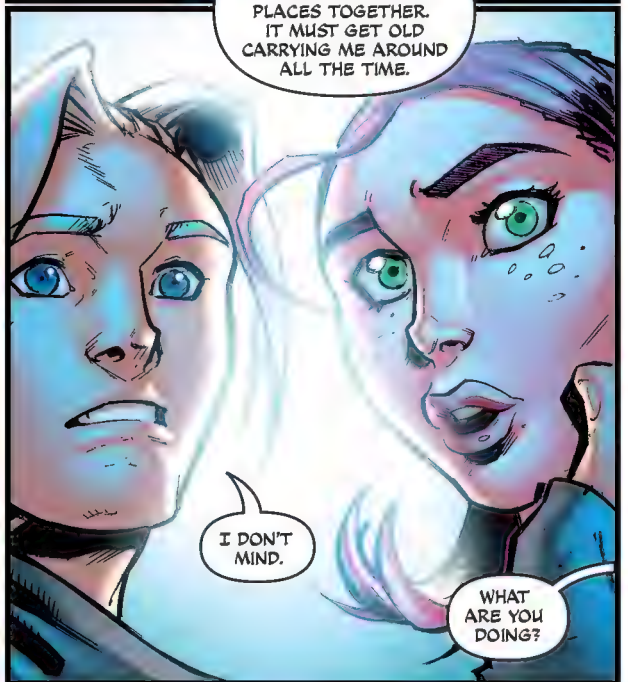
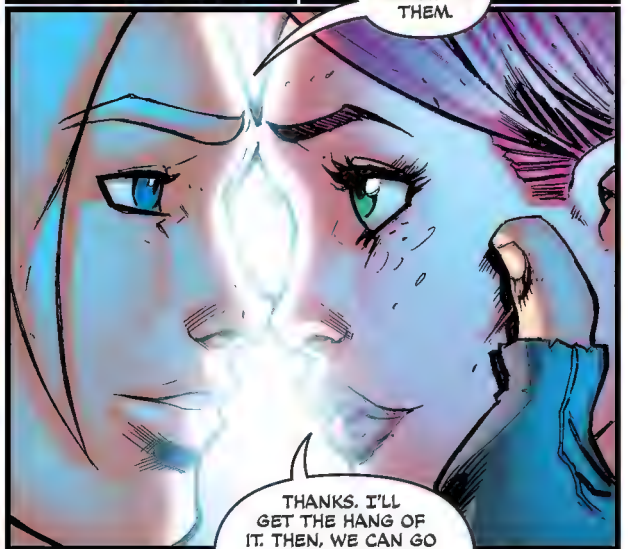
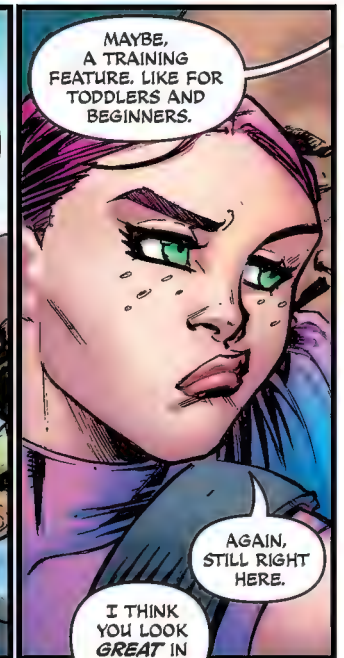
I HATE
YOU.



SORRY.

NO,
YOU'RE
NOT.

SURE
I AM, A
LITTLE.





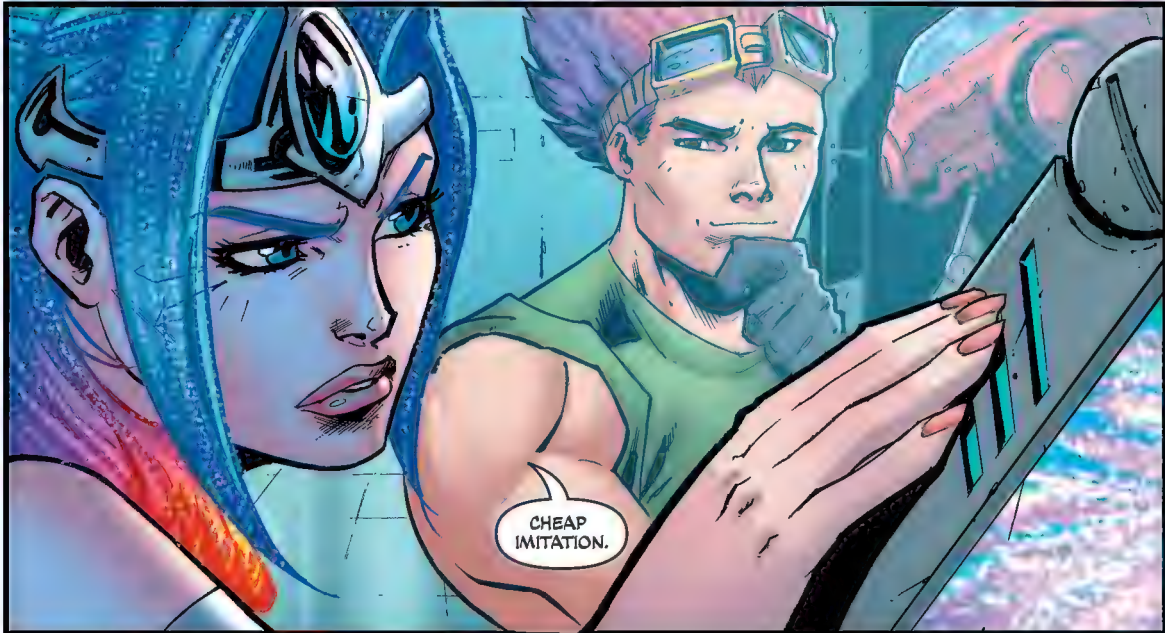
OH, HEY, GRACE. LIST ME AND SONIA, WE WERE JUST...UM, YOU KNOW...

WHAT ARE THOSE SUPPOSED TO BE?



YOU LIKE THEM?

WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE? WINGS.



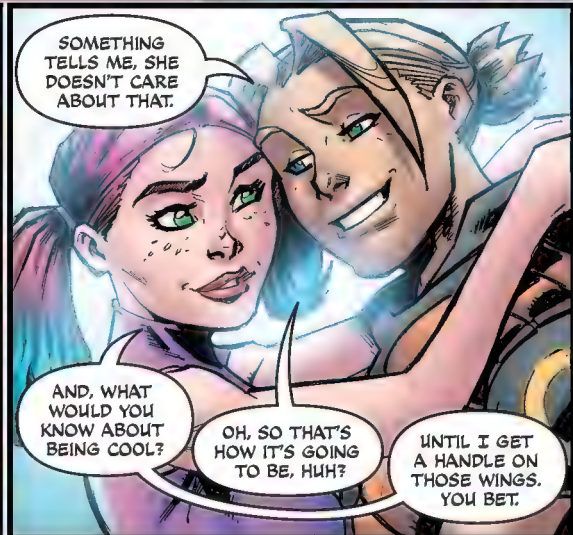
CHEAP IMITATION.



HEY, THEY MAY NOT BE MAGIC, GRACE, BUT THEY'RE NOT CHEAP.

WHAT'S HER PROBLEM?

MAYBE, SHE DOESN'T LIKE THE COMPETITION. WANTS TO KEEP THINKING SHE'S THE COOL ONE.



SOMETHING TELLS ME, SHE DOESN'T CARE ABOUT THAT.

AND, WHAT WOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT BEING COOL?

OH, SO THAT'S HOW IT'S GOING TO BE, HUH?

UNTIL I GET A HANDLE ON THOSE WINGS. YOU BET.



WHOA. WHOA.
WHAT ARE YOU
DOING, PAPA BEAR?
WE'RE ON THE
SAME TEAM!

COME
ON!

THAT'S
WHAT YOU
THINK!



MAL? YOU KNOW, I
DON'T LIKE IT WHEN
YOU GET THOSE FAR
OFF STARES. MAKES
ME NERVOUS.

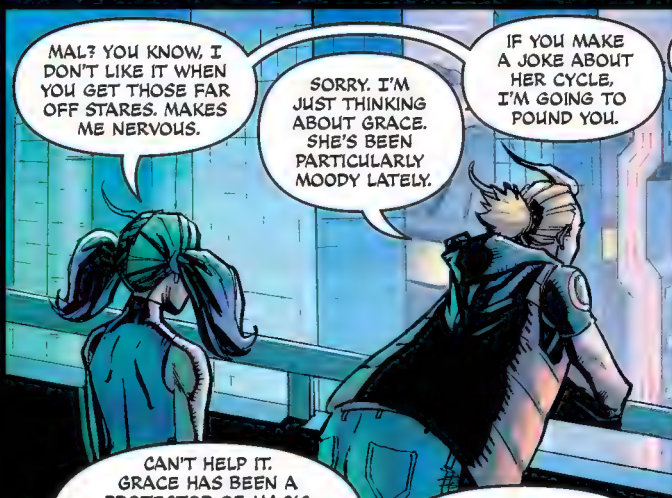
SORRY. I'M
JUST THINKING
ABOUT GRACE.
SHE'S BEEN
PARTICULARLY
MOODY LATELY.

IF YOU MAKE
A JOKE ABOUT
HER CYCLE,
I'M GOING TO
POUND YOU.

I WASN'T
EVEN THINKING
THAT.

GOOD
ANSWER.

IF YOU
ASK ME, YOU
BOTH CARRY
AROUND WAY
TOO MUCH
BAGGAGE.



CAN'T HELP IT.
GRACE HAS BEEN A
PROTECTOR OF MAGIC
FOR CENTURIES. IT'S ALL SHE
KNOWS. AND, I JUMP-STARTED
THIS NEW AGE, SO IT'S
ON ME, TOO. RIGHT?

THE WAY I SEE IT,
YOU DID YOUR PART. AS
SAMUSARA, YOU SPARKED
THE RETURN OF MAGIC. JOB
WELL DONE. IT'S NOT UP
TO YOU TO SAVE THE
WORLD. IS IT?

HAVEN'T WE
BEEN THROUGH
ENOUGH? DON'T WE
DESERVE TIME FOR
OURSELVES? SIMPLY
ENJOY LIFE?

IT
HAS ITS
MOMENTS.

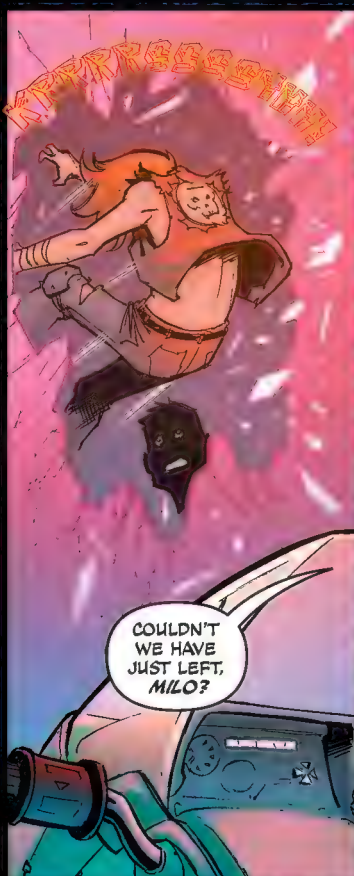
LIKE
NOW?

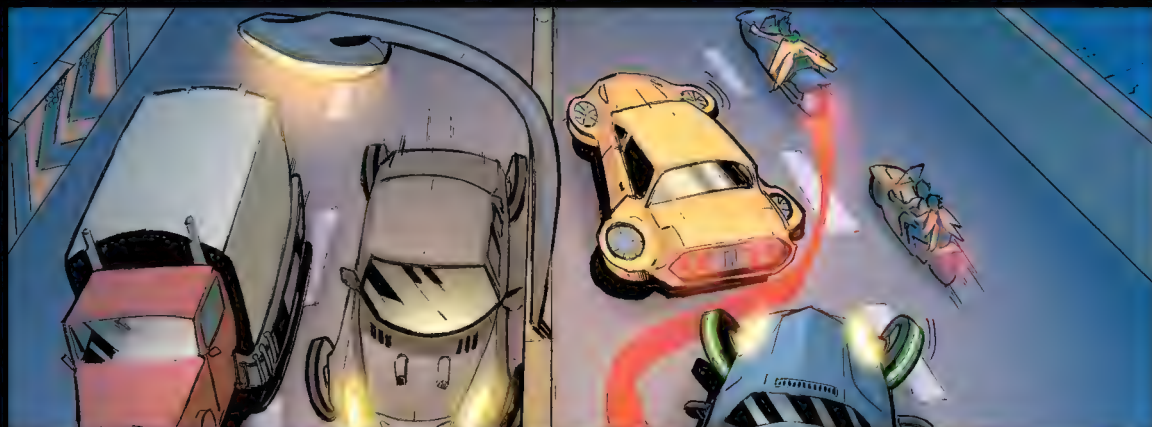
ALMOST.



YOU SAYING
YOU AREN'T
ENJOYING
YOUR LIFE?







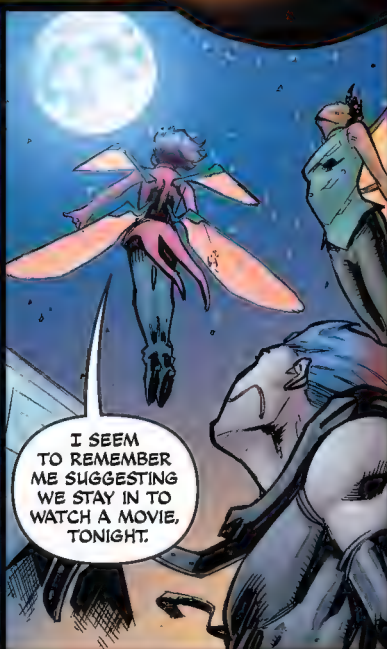




WHAT A MESS.

DON'T BLAME ME. I DIDN'T START IT.

WELL, YOU SURE AS HELL FINISHED IT.



I SEEM TO REMEMBER ME SUGGESTING WE STAY IN TO WATCH A MOVIE, TONIGHT.



I'M NOT GOING TO HIDE IN FEAR, CASSIDY.

NOT SAYING THAT. JUST THAT IT SEEMS THAT WHENEVER WE GO OUT...

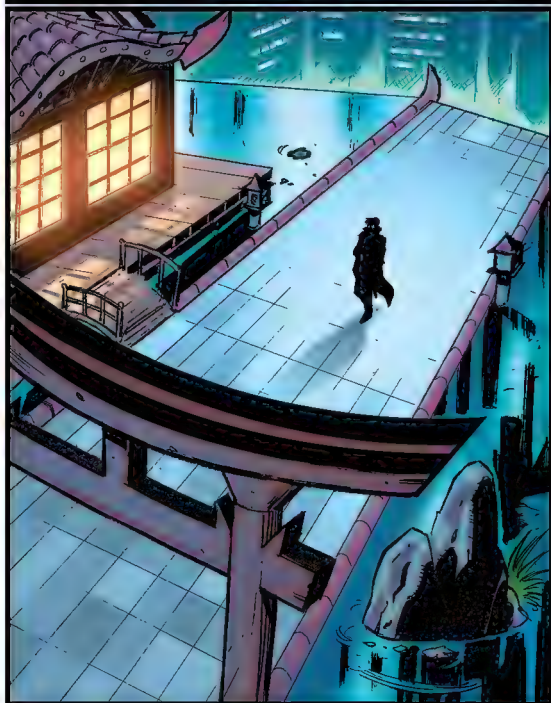


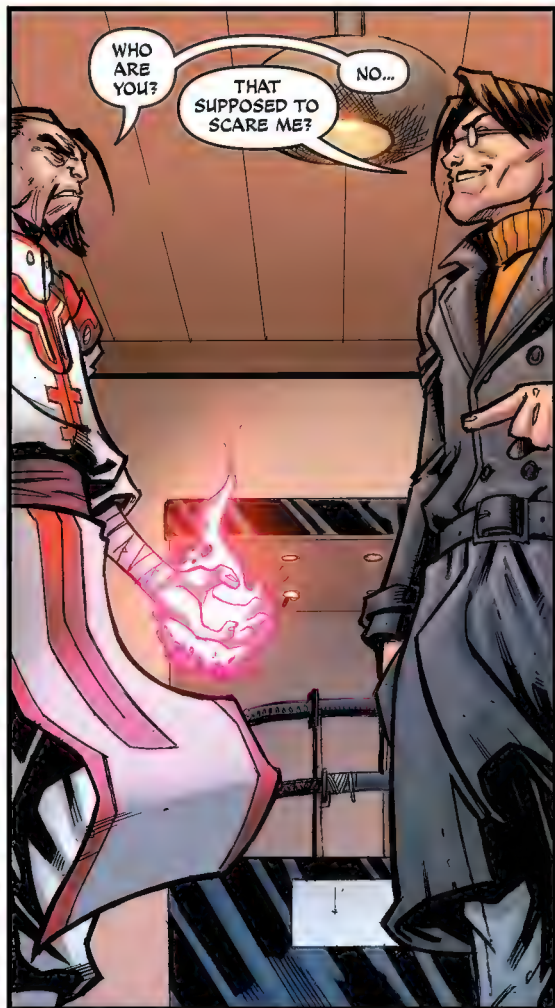
I GUESS THAT'S THE ONE ADVANTAGE THEY GIVE US.

THESE PEOPLE DON'T KNOW HOW TO STAY UNDER THE RADAR.

SIR?

...TROUBLE ALWAYS SEEMS TO FIND US.







GIRLS!/?

WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING?

ISN'T IT
OBVIOUS?



THEY ARE
BETRAYING
YOU.

WHY?



PERHAPS,
IT'S BECAUSE
YOU PROMISED
THEM GREATNESS
AND POWER, BUT
NEVER REALLY
SHARE.

YOU THINK
THE MAGIC BELONGS
TO YOU, BUT IT DOESN'T.
AND YET, YOU CONTINUE
TO DEPRIVE THEM. MAKE
THEM BEG FOR A
TASTE.



OF COURSE,
IT COULD BE
SIMPLY BECAUSE
YOU CALL THEM
'GIRLS.'



NOW,
NOW, LADIES.
WHEN YOU
ARE FINISHED
GLOATING...



...I COULD
REALLY USE
A HAND.

I'M GUESSING
THIS IS EVEN
HEAVIER THAN
IT LOOKS.

TO BE
CONTINUED



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MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE™

**"OUT OF
THE PAST"**

Volume Seven: **PART 2 of 8**

Written by:

**J.T.
Krul**

In 2003, to mark the launch of its new publishing studio, Aspen Comics' Michael Turner put pencil to paper and went about creating a whole new world—a source of light in a strong female warrior, a source of dark in a monstrous mechanical dragon, and a source of power in the form of a seemingly ordinary boy who is anything but. Quickly joining the mega-hit Fathom, Soulfire has become one of Aspen's flagship properties, still going strong fifteen years later.

In San Francisco, Malikai, Grace and friends tested Benoist's new tech toys, but Mal couldn't shake the feeling that something was amiss with Grace. Meanwhile, in Los Angeles, magical rebels Cassidy, Lily and Milo couldn't seem to find their way out of trouble, leaving them exposed to discovery. And, in Tokyo, the Master Ren was ambushed by a mysterious figure, and betrayed by his closest allies—his geisha warriors...

Pencils & Inks by:

**Chahine
Ladjouze**

Digital Inks by:

**Mark Roslan
& Justice**

Color Art by:

**Wes
Hartman**

Lettering by:

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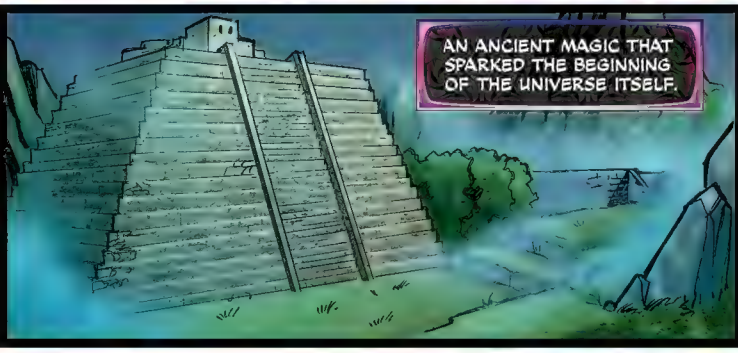
THERE IS
THE WORLD
MOST KNOW...



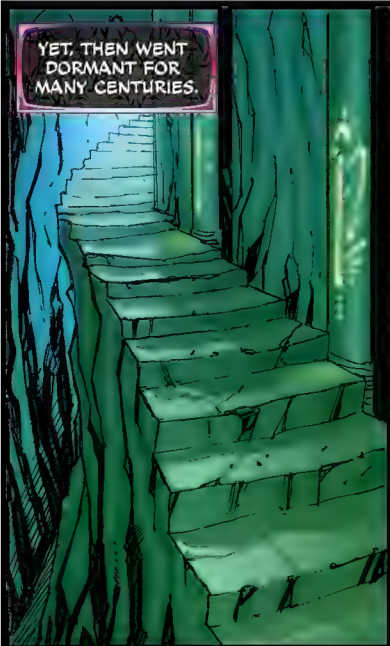
ONE THAT EVOLVED AND EXPANDED
OVER THE YEARS, THRUST INTO THE
FUTURE THROUGH ADVANCEMENTS
IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.



BUT, IN DOING SO, THE WORLD
LOST ITS CONNECTION WITH
A MUCH GREATER POWER.



AN ANCIENT MAGIC THAT
SPARKED THE BEGINNING
OF THE UNIVERSE ITSELF.



YET, THEN WENT
DORMANT FOR
MANY CENTURIES.



SURVIVING ONLY
IN THE MOST
HIDDEN LAIRS.

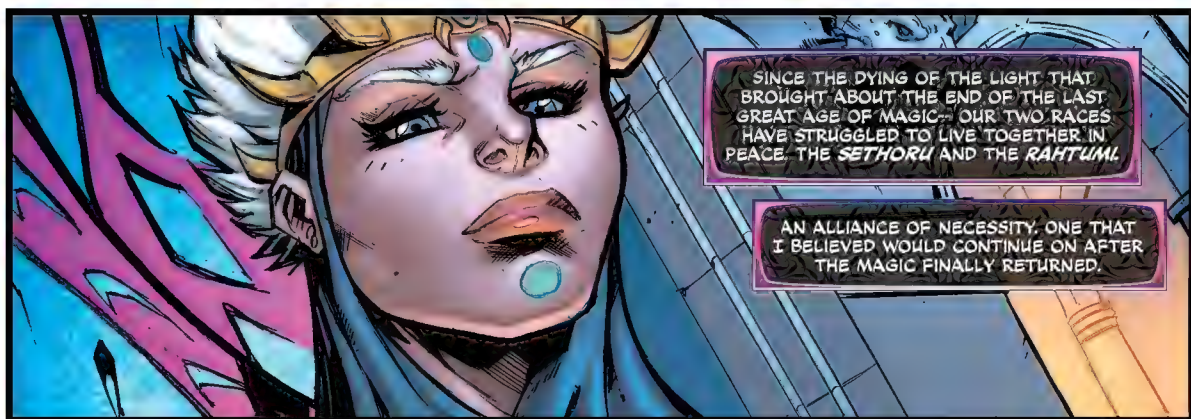


GLOWING FAINTLY,
LIKE EMBERS OF
A DYING FIRE.



THE EVERLANDS. THE KINGDOM OF ANANTIA.

WAITING TO ROAR TO LIFE ONCE MORE.

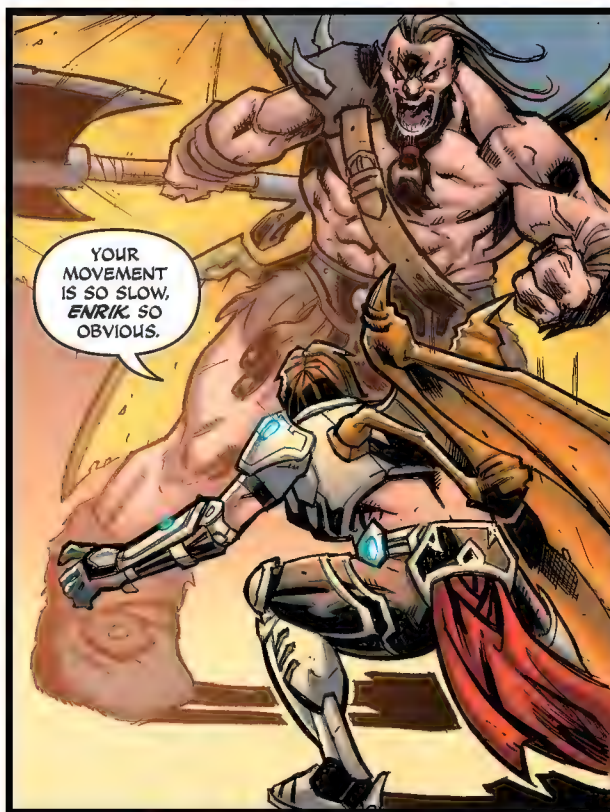


SINCE THE DYING OF THE LIGHT THAT BROUGHT ABOUT THE END OF THE LAST GREAT AGE OF MAGIC—OUR TWO RACES HAVE STRUGGLED TO LIVE TOGETHER IN PEACE. THE *SETHORU* AND THE *RAHTUMI*.

AN ALLIANCE OF NECESSITY. ONE THAT I BELIEVED WOULD CONTINUE ON AFTER THE MAGIC FINALLY RETURNED.



BUT NOW THAT IT HAS, I AM NOT SO SURE.

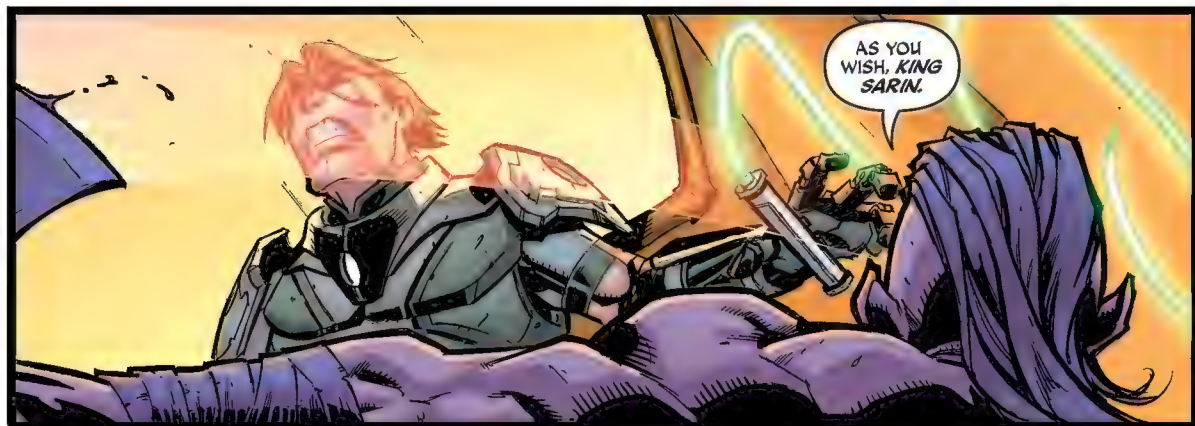


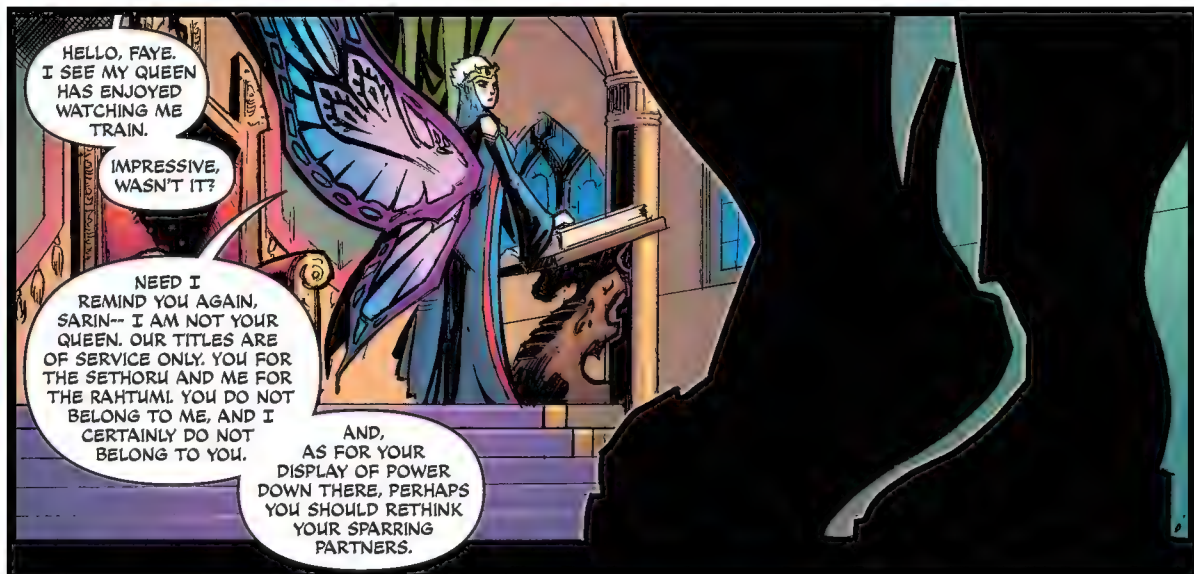
YOUR MOVEMENT IS SO SLOW, *ENRIK*. SO OBVIOUS.



YOU DO YOUR KING NO FAVORS BY HOLDING BACK.

AN ENEMY WOULD NOT SHOW ME THE SAME COURTESY, SO NEITHER SHOULD YOU.





HELLO, FAYE. I SEE MY QUEEN HAS ENJOYED WATCHING ME TRAIN.

IMPRESSIVE, WASN'T IT?

NEED I REMIND YOU AGAIN, SARIN-- I AM NOT YOUR QUEEN. OUR TITLES ARE OF SERVICE ONLY. YOU FOR THE SETHORU AND ME FOR THE RAHTUMI. YOU DO NOT BELONG TO ME, AND I CERTAINLY DO NOT BELONG TO YOU.

AND, AS FOR YOUR DISPLAY OF POWER DOWN THERE, PERHAPS YOU SHOULD RETHINK YOUR SPARRING PARTNERS.



ENRIK WAS NO TROUBLE. I TOOK CARE OF HIM EASILY ENOUGH.



I MEANT THAT HAVING A SETHORU AND A RAHTUMI ENGAGED IN COMBAT, EVEN FOR SPORT, IS UNWISE, SINCE ONYX'S FAILED ATTEMPT TO BREAK THE UNION BETWEEN OUR RACES, TENSIONS HAVE REMAINED.

AS THE MAGIC RETURNS, AND OUR POWERS GROW, SO TOO DOES THE DANGER. I FEAR FOR THE STRENGTH OF OUR UNION.



I KNOW HOW OUR UNION COULD BE STRENGTHENED, A WAY TO UNITE OUR RACES. BUT, SO FAR, YOU HAVE DECLINED MY... INVITATION.



PERHAPS, THE SETHORU WOULD BE BETTER SERVED BY A KING WHO THINKS OF *THEIR* NEEDS BEFORE HIS OWN.

CAREFUL, FAYE. WORDS SUCH AS THOSE COULD BE CONSTRUED AS TREASONOUS.

I ONLY MEANT TO OFFER MY COUNSEL.



YES, WELL-- LIKE YOU SAID. I AM THEIR KING. NOT YOURS. I DO NOT NEED YOUR ADVICE.

BUT, I DO AGREE ON ONE THING. OUR POWER IS GROWING...



"...AND SO IS
THE DANGER."

YOU ALL
NEEDN'T HAVE
COME WITH ME,
TONIGHT, *MALIKAL*.
I CAN TAKE CARE
OF MYSELF.

I KNOW, *GRACE*.
BUT SOMETIMES,
YOU TEND TO GET
LOST IN YOUR HEAD.
FIGURED THAT YOU
COULD USE THE
COMPANY.

IF NOTHING
ELSE, WE'RE A
DISTRACTION.

A DISTRACTION
INDEED.

DRAGONS ARE
SMART ENOUGH TO
AVOID DETECTION WHEN
THEY DESIRE, AND IT'S EVEN
EASIER FOR THEM WHEN
YOU ARE MAKING SO
MUCH NOISE.

DID SHE SAY
SOMETHING,
BENOIST?

DIDN'T HEAR
A THING, *P.J.*

NOT WITH
ALL THIS
NOISE!



HOLD
UP, BOYS
AND GIRLS.
MESSAGE
COMING IN.

WHO'S
IT FROM?



REN.

GRACE...
MALIKAL...

I WOULD
HAVE REACHED
OUT SOONER, BUT
AS YOU MAY SEE,
I WASN'T UP
TO IT.



GEEZ, MAN.
HE LOOKS LIKE
CRAP. THINK HE
WENT ON ANOTHER
BENDER OR
WHAT?

SHUT
UP, P.J.

IT WAS
JUST A JOKE,
SONIA.



LISTEN.

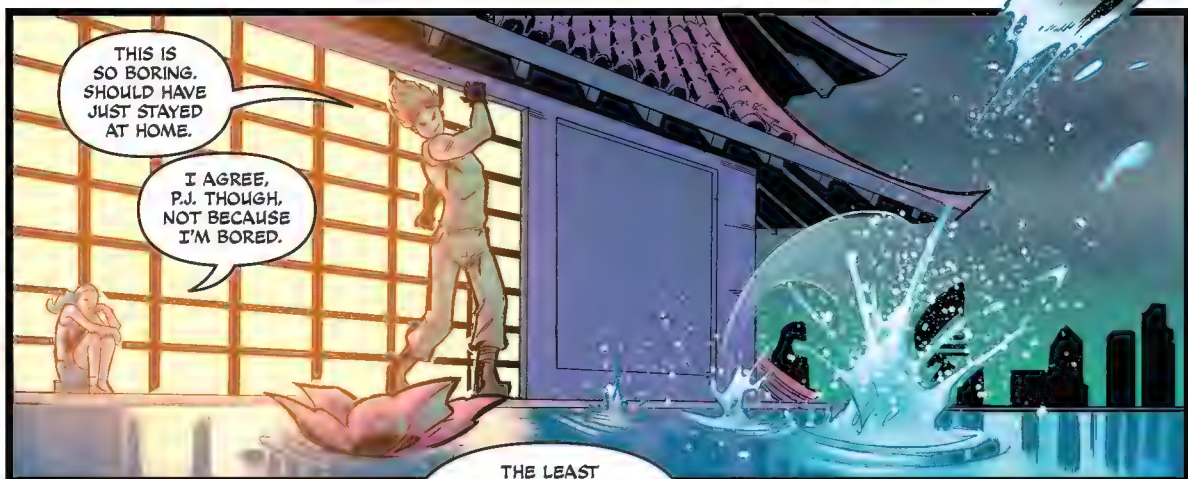
HAD AN
INTRUDER THE
OTHER NIGHT. I WAS
CAUGHT OFF GUARD--
IN MORE WAYS
THAN ONE.



HE
ALREADY HAD
POWER, BUT
WAS SEEKING
SOMETHING
EVEN MORE
DANGEROUS.

LIKE
WHAT?

KNOWLEDGE.



LOOKS TO ME
LIKE REN MIGHT
BE ON HIS OWN.

IT'S HARD TO SEE HIM
LIKE THIS. REN WAS THE
ONE WHO TAUGHT ME ABOUT
THE POWER I POSSESS.

AS ONE OF THE FIVE MASTERS
CHARGED WITH HELPING ME ON
MY JOURNEY TO SPARK THE NEW
AGE OF MAGIC, HE SHOWED ME
HOW TO HARNESS IT. CONTROL IT.

AND, WHEN
NEEDED—
UNLEASH IT.

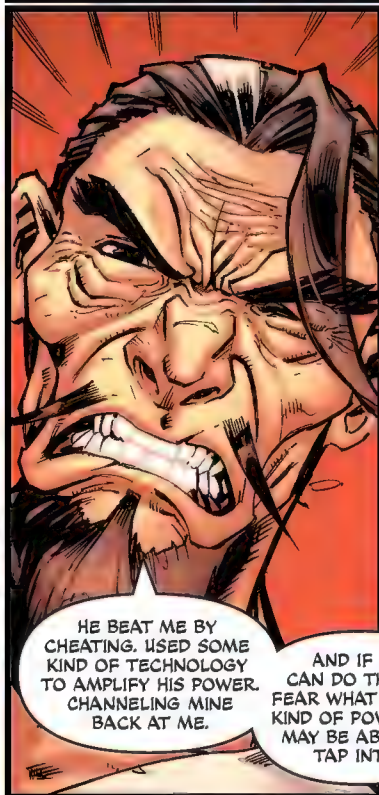
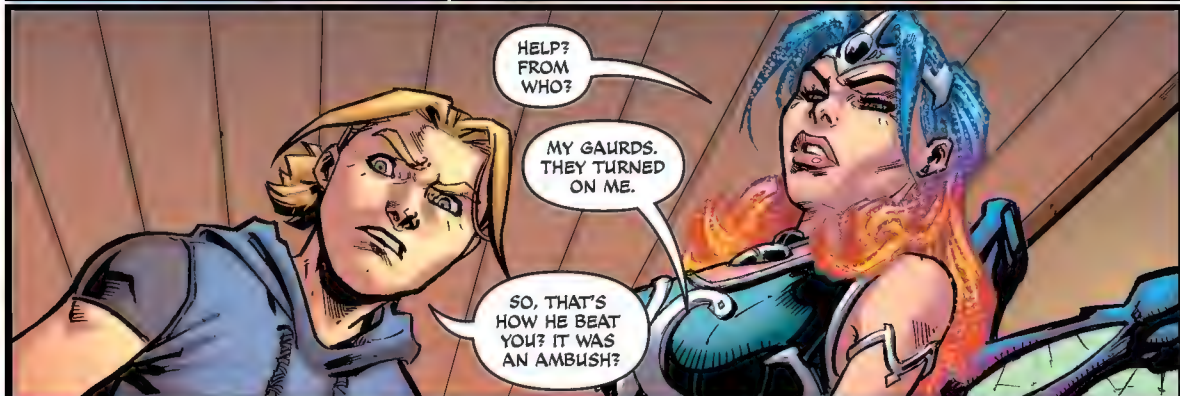
WHOEVER
DID THIS HAD TO
HAVE SOME REAL
FIREPOWER,
GRACE.

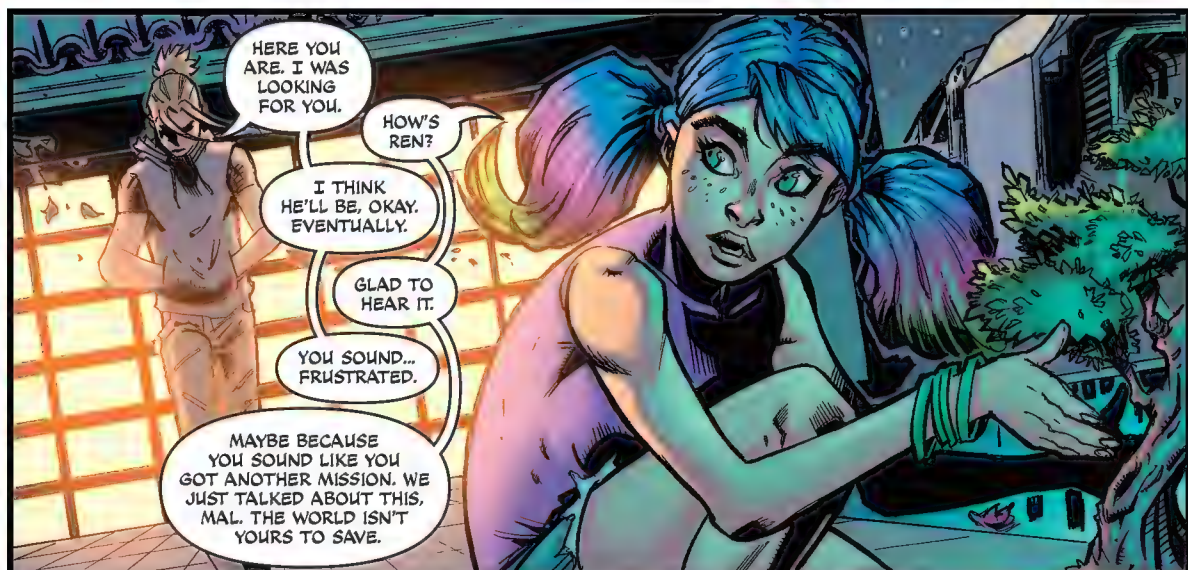
UNFORTUNATELY,
THAT IS A PRETTY LONG
LIST, MALIKAI. INCLUDING
THOSE WITH MAGIC AND
THOSE WITHOUT.

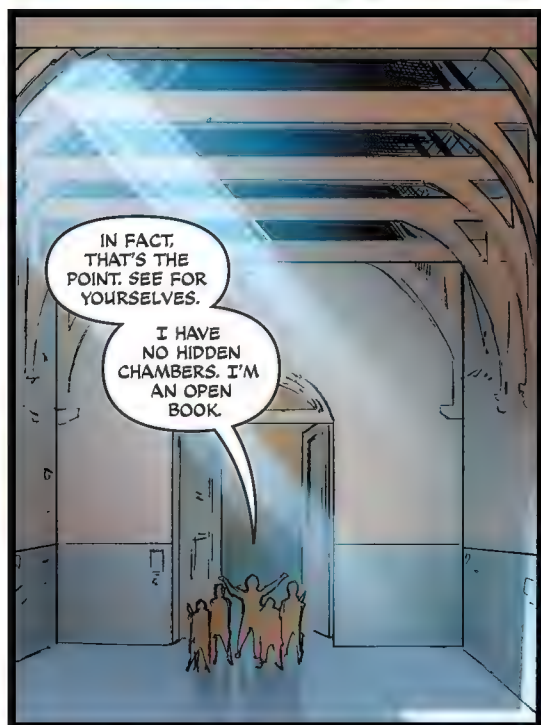
THINK
THERE WAS
A REASON HE
DIDN'T SAY WHO
ATTACKED
HIM?

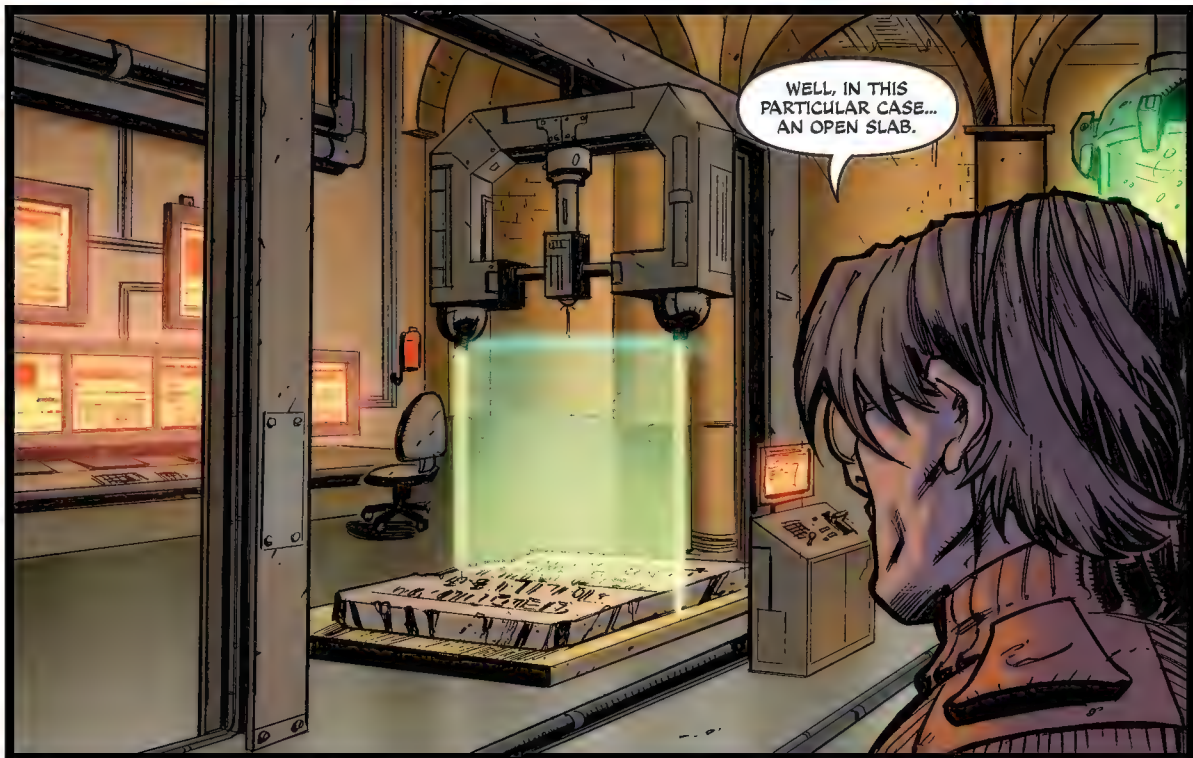
THERE IS,
MALIKAI...

BECAUSE, I
DO NOT KNOW
WHO IT WAS.







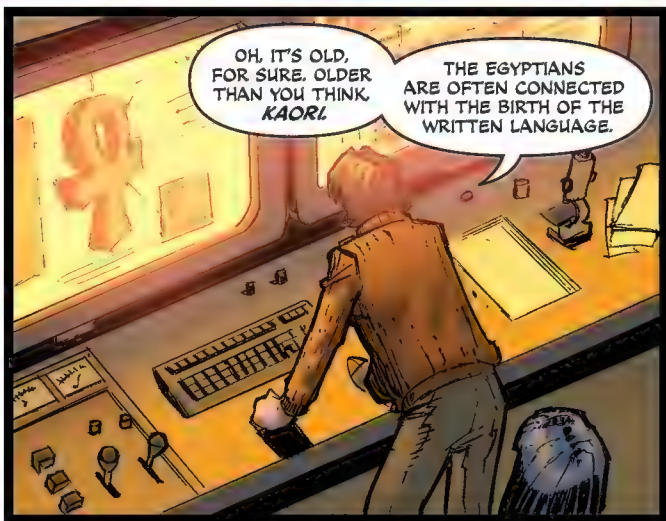


WELL, IN THIS PARTICULAR CASE... AN OPEN SLAB.



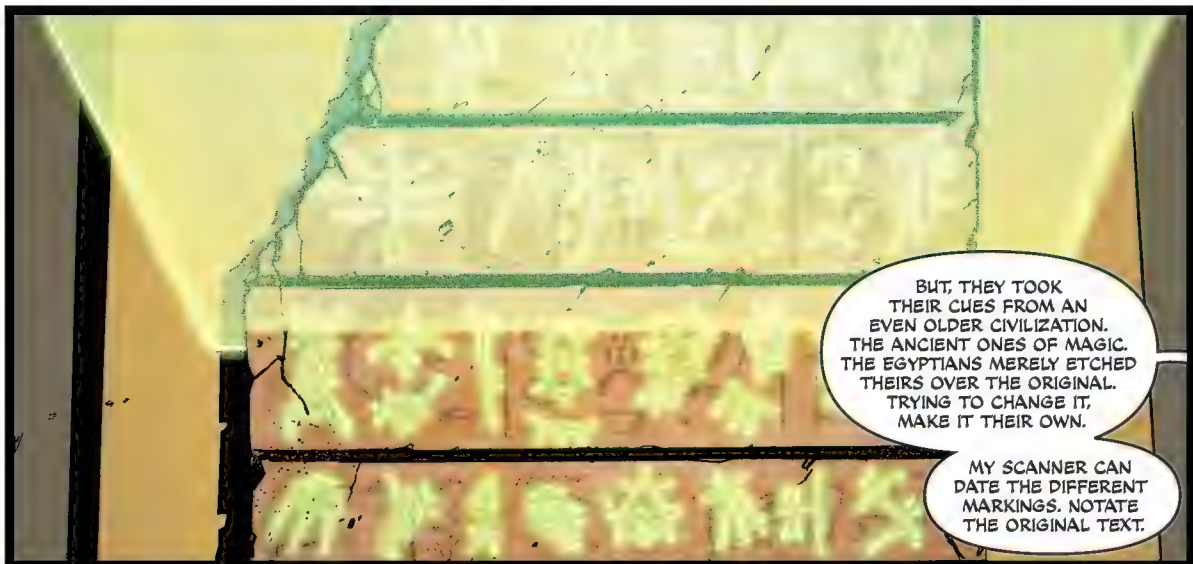
IT'S EGYPTIAN, ISN'T IT?

REN WAS ALWAYS COLLECTING OLD ARTIFACTS LIKE THIS. WHAT MAKES THIS ONE SO SPECIAL?



OH, IT'S OLD, FOR SURE. OLDER THAN YOU THINK, KAORI.

THE EGYPTIANS ARE OFTEN CONNECTED WITH THE BIRTH OF THE WRITTEN LANGUAGE.

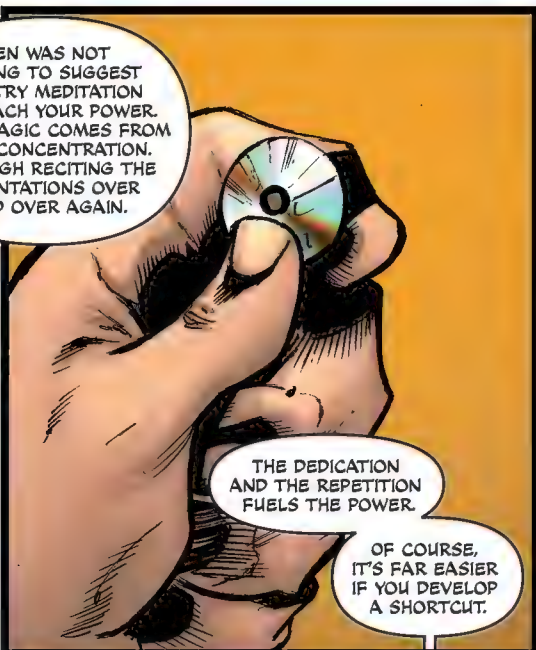


BUT, THEY TOOK THEIR CUES FROM AN EVEN OLDER CIVILIZATION. THE ANCIENT ONES OF MAGIC. THE EGYPTIANS MERELY ETCHED THEIRS OVER THE ORIGINAL. TRYING TO CHANGE IT, MAKE IT THEIR OWN.

MY SCANNER CAN DATE THE DIFFERENT MARKINGS. NOTATE THE ORIGINAL TEXT.

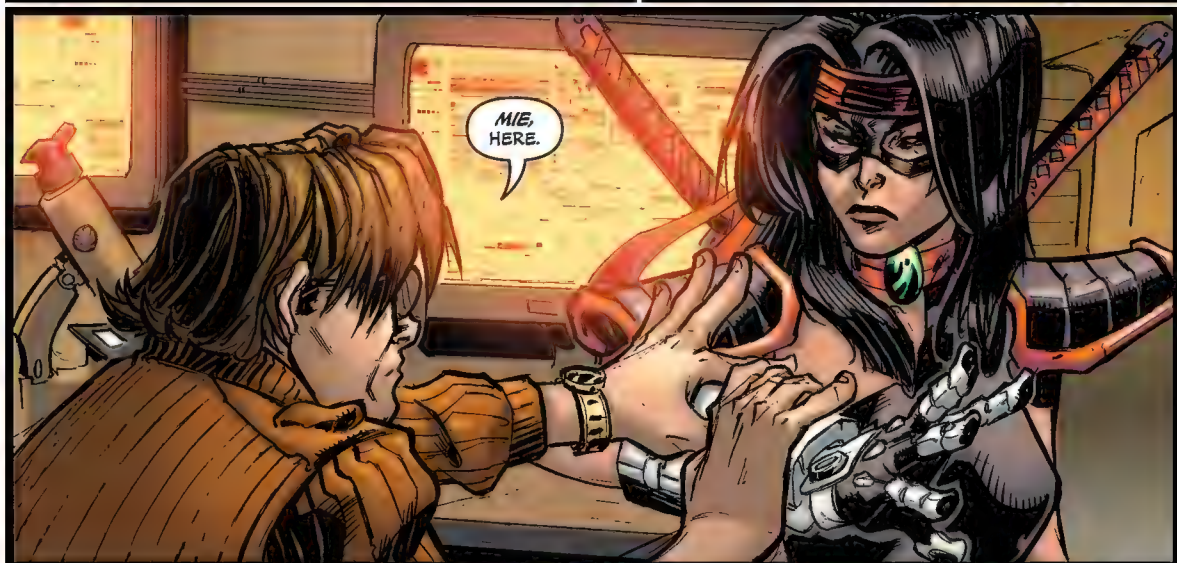


REN WAS NOT
WRONG TO SUGGEST
YOU TRY MEDITATION
TO REACH YOUR POWER.
SOME MAGIC COMES FROM
SUCH CONCENTRATION.
THROUGH RECITING THE
INCANTATIONS OVER
AND OVER AGAIN.



THE DEDICATION
AND THE REPETITION
FUELS THE POWER.

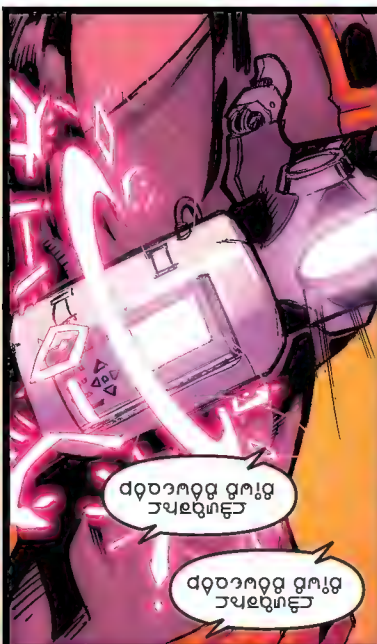
OF COURSE,
IT'S FAR EASIER
IF YOU DEVELOP
A SHORTCUT.

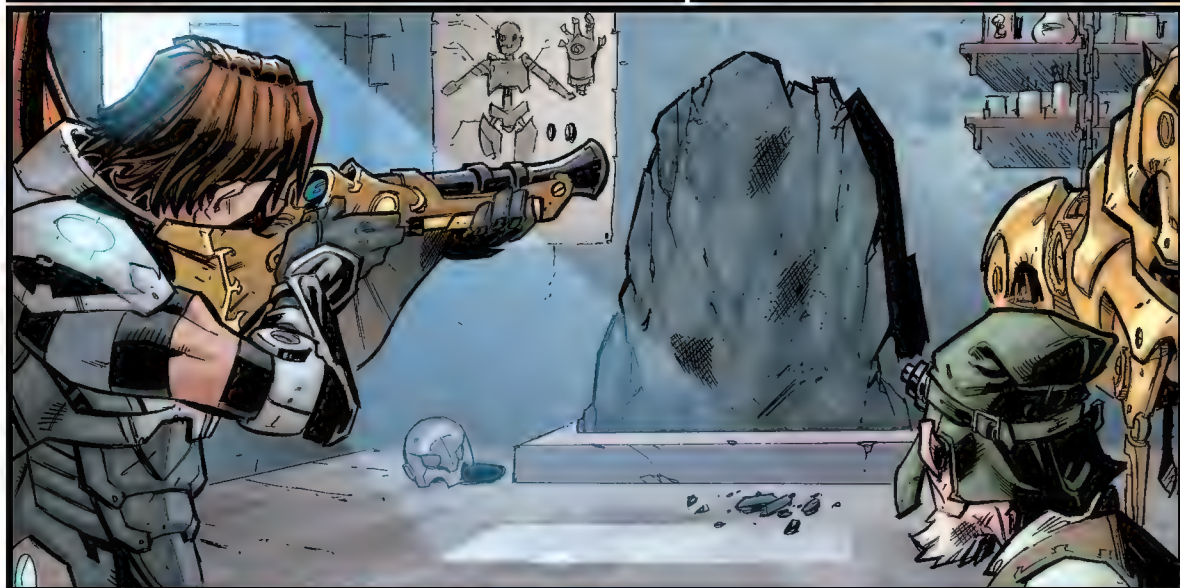
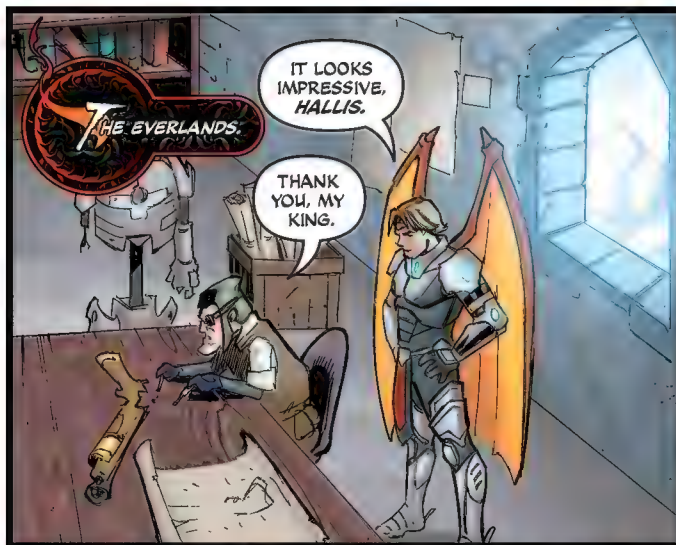


MIE,
HERE.



WELL,
GO AHEAD.
TRY IT.







KING,
NISABA. FIRST
AND FOREMOST,
I AM YOUR
KING.

MY
APOLOGIES.



I DID
WARN YOU THAT
THESE KINDS OF
EXPERIMENTS ARE
ILL-ADVISED.

I APPRECIATE
YOU COMING TO
VOICE YOUR CONCERN,
BUT I DO NOT
NEED IT.



OR HAVE
YOU COME
TO BRING
ME A GIFT?

HELLO,
EVANI.

I AM
NOT *NISABA*'S
TO GIVE.



THEN,
WHO SHALL
I ADDRESS
ABOUT THE
MATTER?

IF YOU
HAVE A NEED
OF ME, YOU
MERELY HAVE
TO ASK.

YOU
MISUNDERSTAND MY
POINT, SARIN. A WEAPON
ISN'T POWER. FOR IT CAN
ALWAYS BE TURNED
AGAINST YOU.



TRUE
POWER COMES
FROM WITHIN.



ALWAYS
FROM
WITHIN.



DO I
HAVE YOUR
ATTENTION,
NOW?

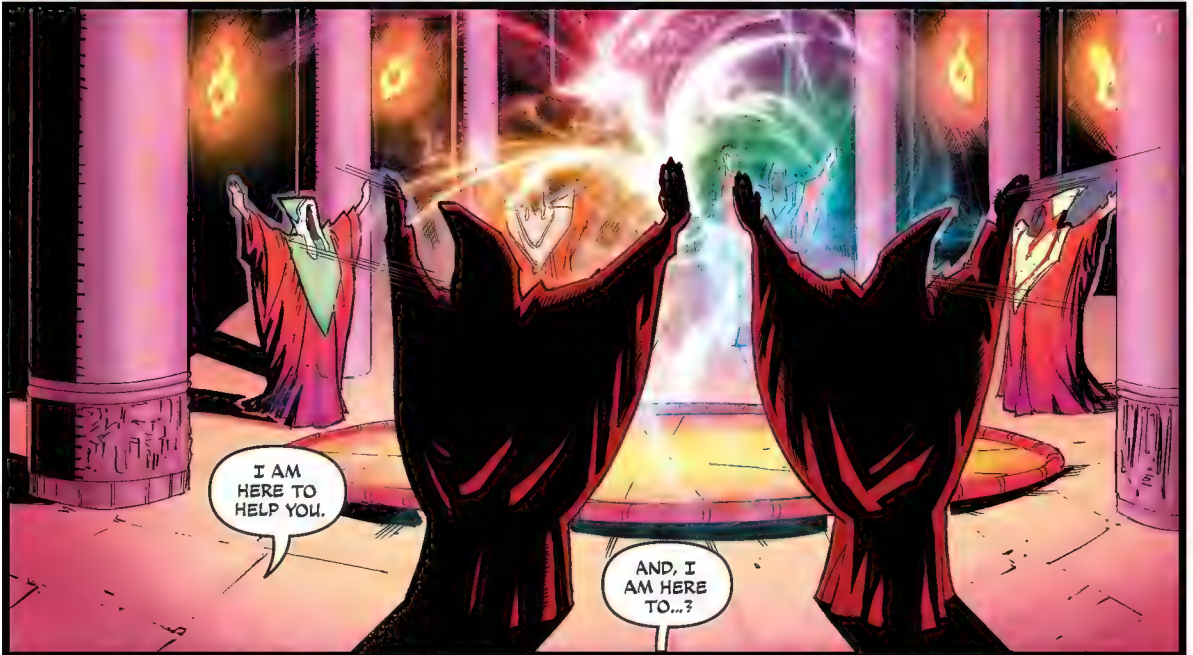


WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME, NISABA?

I KNOW WHAT YOU DESIRE, SARIN. AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, I KNOW HOW TO HELP YOU ACHIEVE IT.



YOU SHOULD TRY TO REMEMBER THAT WE ARE FAMILY. WE ARE BLOOD. YOUR SUCCESS IS MY SUCCESS. YOUR VICTORY IS MY VICTORY.



I AM HERE TO HELP YOU.

AND, I AM HERE TO...?



TO GAIN THAT POWER YOU SEEK.

HELLO?

DID WE TREK ALL THE WAY DOWN HERE TO GET THE SILENT TREATMENT?

IT IS A LONG JOURNEY.



ESPECIALLY FOR ONE
WITH SUCH
TINY LEGS.

THAT
IS NO WAY
TO TALK TO
YOUR KING,
ONYX

TO BE
CONTINUED.



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MICHAEL SOULFIRE™

**"A WING AND
A PRAYER"**

Volume Seven **PART 3 of 8**

Written by:

**J.T.
Krul**

In 2003, to mark the launch of his own publishing studio, Aspen Comics, Michael Turner put pencil to paper and went about creating a whole new world—a source of light in a strong female warrior, a source of dark in a monstrous mechanical dragon, and a source of power in the form of a seemingly ordinary boy who is anything but. Quickly joining the mega-hit Fathom, Soulfire has become one of Aspen's flagship properties, still going strong fifteen years later.

As the master Ren recovered from the ambush at his temple, the group departed in search of Janus and the Geisha Guards, much to Sonia's chagrin. Meanwhile, magic continued to become twisted with technology in new and frightening ways—in both the human and magic worlds...

Pencils & Inks by:

**Chahine
Ladjouze**

Digital Inks by:

**Mark Roslan
& Justice**

Color Art by:

**Wes
Hartman**

Lettering by:

Zen



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SOULFIRE CREATED BY MICHAEL TURNER

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LOS ANGELES.

LIKE MOST KIDS, I DREAMED OF FLYING WHEN I WAS LITTLE. THE THOUGHT OF IT NEVER SCARED ME. I WAS FEARLESS. I WAS EXCITED.

READY?

ONE, TWO...



BUT THEN AGAIN, PARENTS HAVE A WAY OF MAKING YOU FEEL INVINCIBLE. THE WAY THEY ARE ALWAYS LOOKING OUT FOR YOU. PROTECTING YOU. LOVING YOU.

THREEEEE!

WEEEEEE!



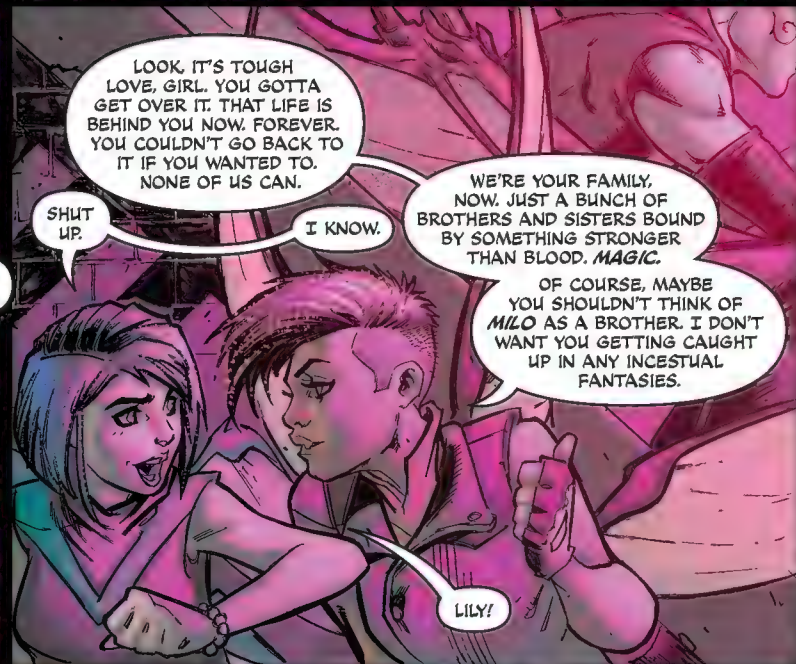
NEVER IMAGINED THAT DREAM WOULD EVER COME TRUE.

AGAIN!

OKAY, OKAY...

OR THAT IT WOULD COME
AT SUCH A HEAVY PRICE.





KINGDOM OF ANANTIA: THE
MAGICAL REALM OF THE EVERLANDS.



THE GREAT
AND POWERFUL
ONYX. HAVE TO
SAY, I'M NOT
IMPRESSED.

TELL
YOUR CLERICS
TO DEASE THEIR
BINDING SPELL, AND
I WILL SHOW YOU
WHAT POWER
REALLY IS



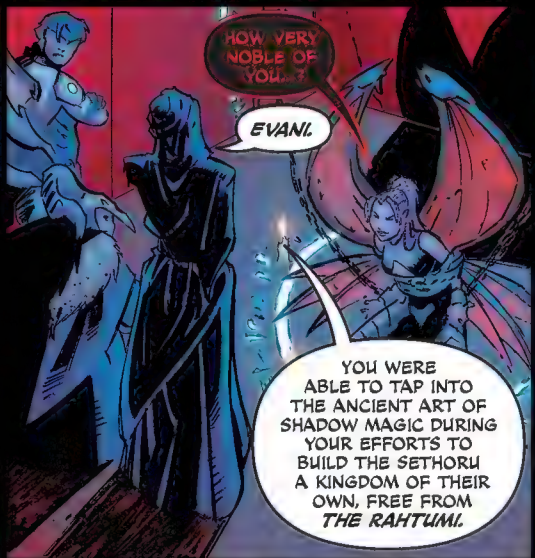
YOU WILL
ADDRESS
HIM AS **KING
SARIN**. HE IS LORD
OVER ALL THE
EVERLANDS.

THE
EVERLANDS? YOUR KINGDOM
IS NOT AS VAST
AS YOU THINK
NISABA.



ENOUGH. WE DID
NOT COME HERE TO
WASTE TIME ON INANE
BANTER. WE HAVE MORE
IMPORTANT BUSINESS
THAN EXCHANGING
INSULTS.

ONYX, WE
ARE HERE ON
BEHALF OF ALL
LIKE US, OF ALL
SETHORU.



HOW VERY
NOBLE OF
YOU.

EVANI.

YOU WERE
ABLE TO TAP INTO
THE ANCIENT ART OF
SHADOW MAGIC DURING
YOUR EFFORTS TO
BUILD THE **SETHORU**
A KINGDOM OF THEIR
OWN, FREE FROM
THE RAHTUMI.



YES THE
SHADOW MAGIC.
A POWER BEYOND
ANYTHING YOU
CAN IMAGINE



ENOUGH BOASTING, ONYX. BOTTOM LINE IS YOU FAILED. AND YET, THE POWER YOU UNLEASHED COULD BE OF GREAT USE TO ME.

TELL ME, HOW DID YOU DO IT? NISABA HAS ACCESS TO THE SAME WORKS THAT YOU CONSULTED, AND YET SHE HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO ACCESS ITS POWER.



A BOOK CAN ONLY DO SO MUCH. IT IS MERELY A KEY USELESS UNLESS YOU FIND THE RIGHT DOOR.

IT COULD TAKE YOU, IF YOU UNCHAINED ME.

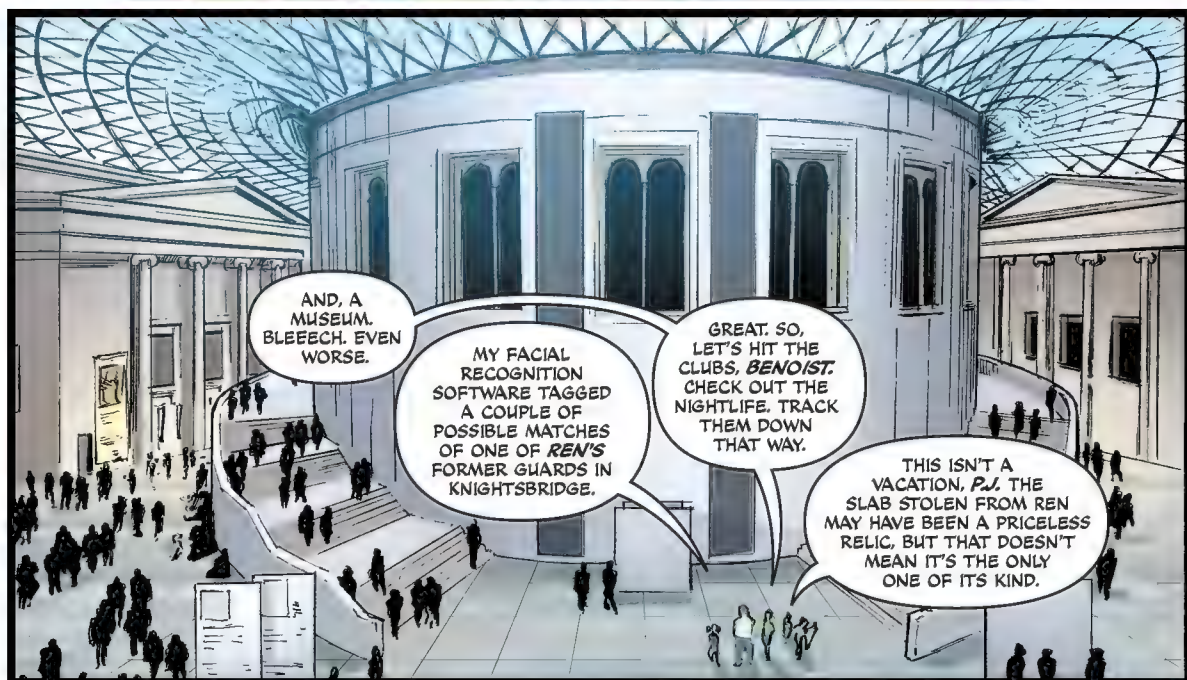
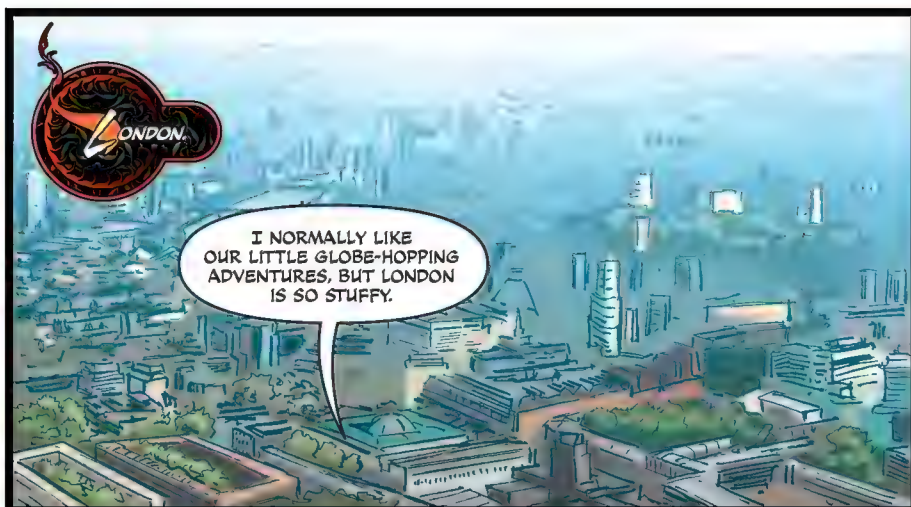


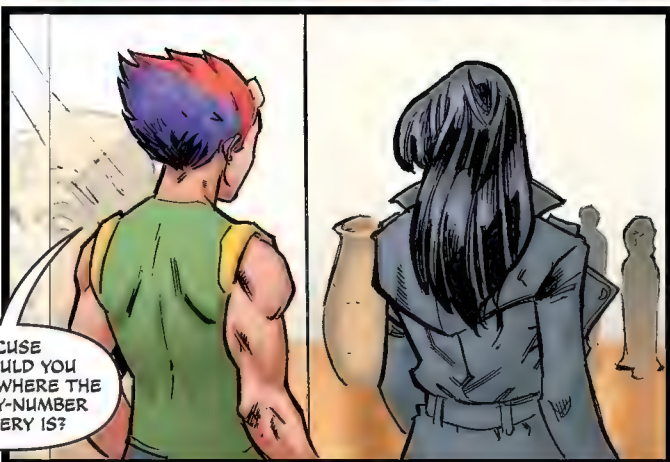
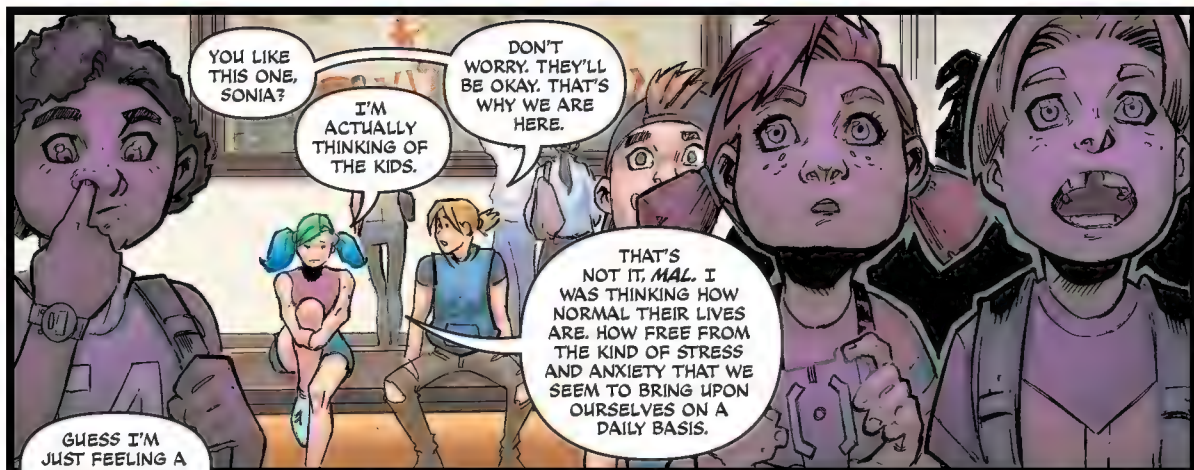
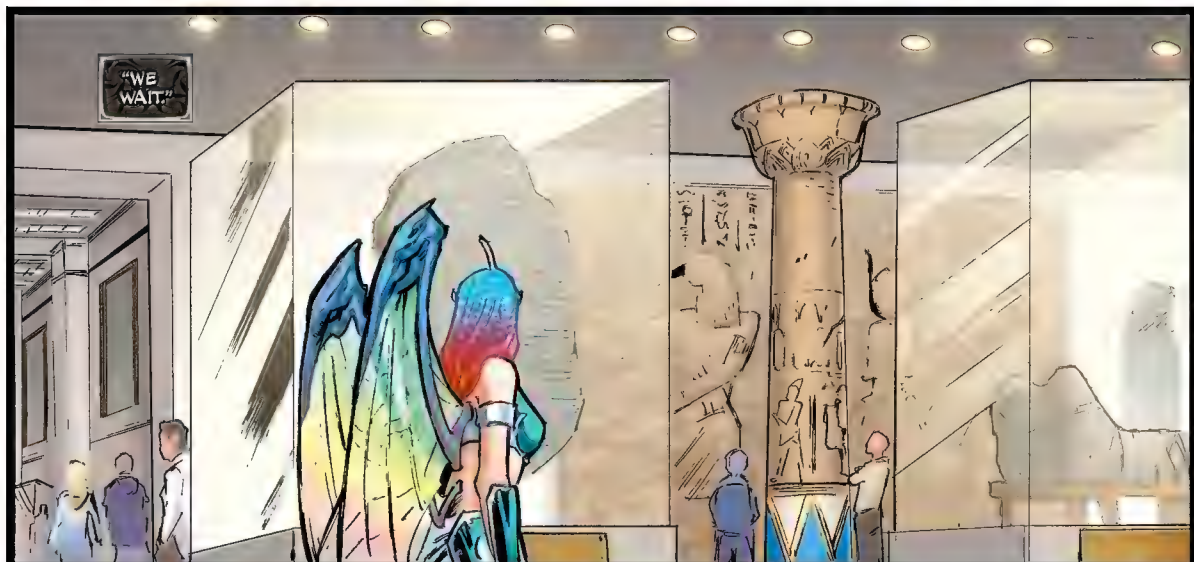
TEMPTING, WITCH.

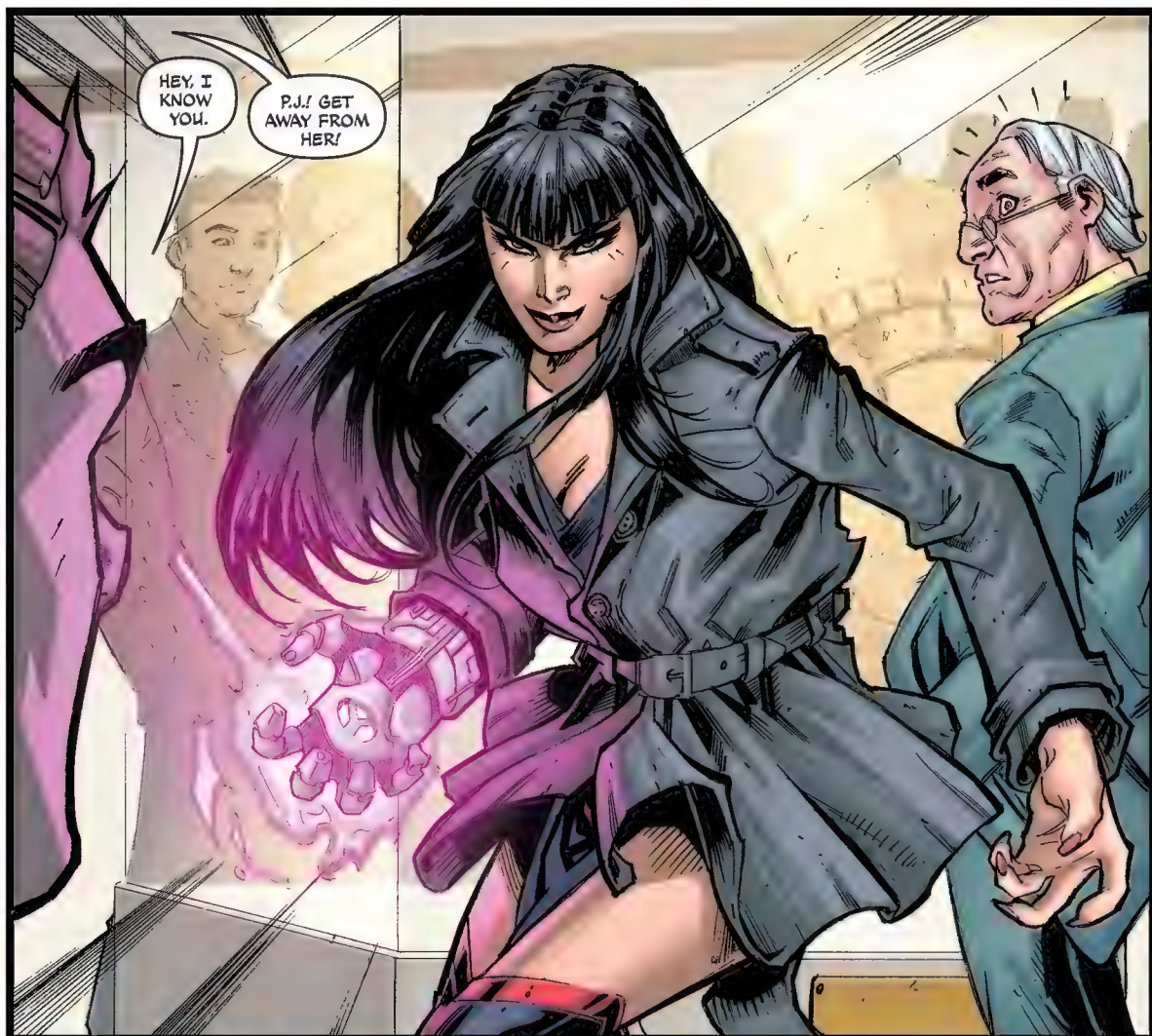


BUT, PERHAPS YOU COULD SIMPLY **SHOW ME.**

I THINK THAT WOULD BE SAFER. FOR ALL OF US.









HERE TOO!



THIS IS EXACTLY THE KIND OF ANXIETY I WAS TALKING ABOUT!

I'M ON IT, SONIA.





SEE, LADIES,
THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN
REALIZING, WHENEVER I MEET
OTHERS WHO HAVE A TOUCH
OF MAGIC AT THEIR
DISPOSAL.







FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS, I WOULD SAY THAT ONYX IS PLAYING WITH US.

IF THERE WAS EVER ANY MAGIC HERE, IT MUST HAVE DIED EONS AGO.



SHE MAY HAVE BEEN LESS THAN HONEST, BUT EVEN IN DECEPTION SOME TRUTH CAN BE REVEALED. YOU MUST HAVE PATIENCE, MY KING.

YOU CANNOT WIELD THE MYSTERIES OF THE UNIVERSE AS EASILY AS YOU WOULD A SWORD.



MAYBE, A SWORD IS EXACTLY WHAT I NEED.

PLACED AGAINST ONYX'S THROAT, IT MAY PRODUCE FASTER RESULTS.



KILLING HER MIGHT DESTROY ANY CHANCE OF FINDING THAT WHICH WE SEEK.

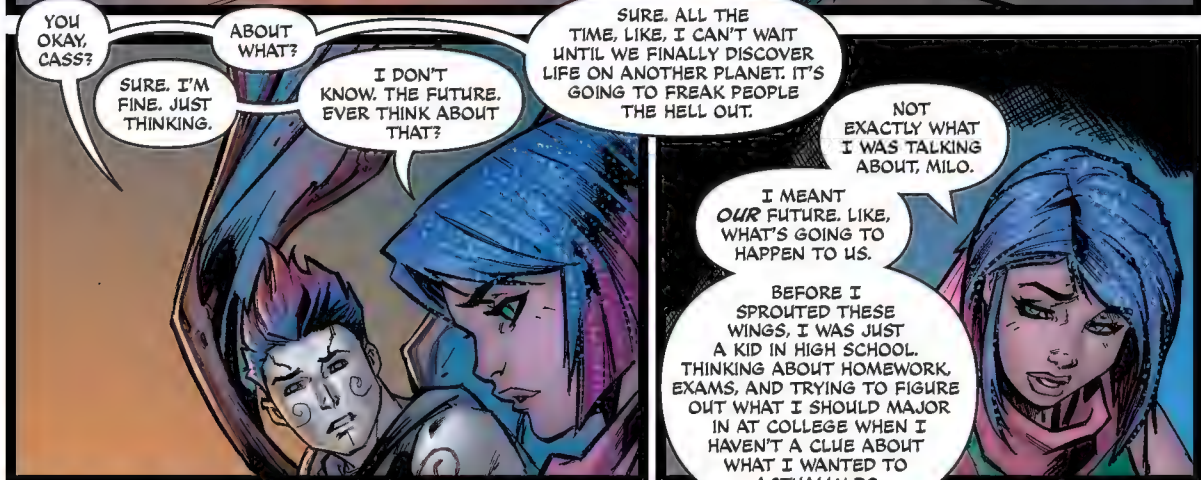
YEAH, YEAH. BUT, IT WOULD SURE BE SATISFYING.



GAAAAH...

WHAT IF I JUST SEVERED ONE OF HER HANDS? OR HER WINGS? THAT MIGHT GET THE POINT ACROSS.

WHATEVER YOU SAY, MY KING.







AT LEAST
THEY PROVIDED
US WITH AN
EASY EXIT.



LOOK
OUT!

SOME PHRASE
COMES TO MIND
ABOUT FRYING PANS
AND FIRES, BUT I
DON'T REMEMBER
IT EXACTLY.



THIS WAY!
SOMETHING TELLS
ME GOING HIGHER
IS WHAT THEY
EXPECT.



THEY'VE
HEADED INTO
THE PARK.
FLUSH THEM
OUT.

YES, SIR.
ON OUR
WAY.





NNNNN!

WHAT
WAS THAT
THING?!

WHERE
WAS THAT
THING?!

COMMAND!
ADDITIONAL
HOSTILES
ENGAGED!
REPEAT--

DON'T
LOOK SO
SCARED. WE'RE
ON YOUR
SIDE.



CAN'T
YOU
TELL?

TO BE
CONTINUED.



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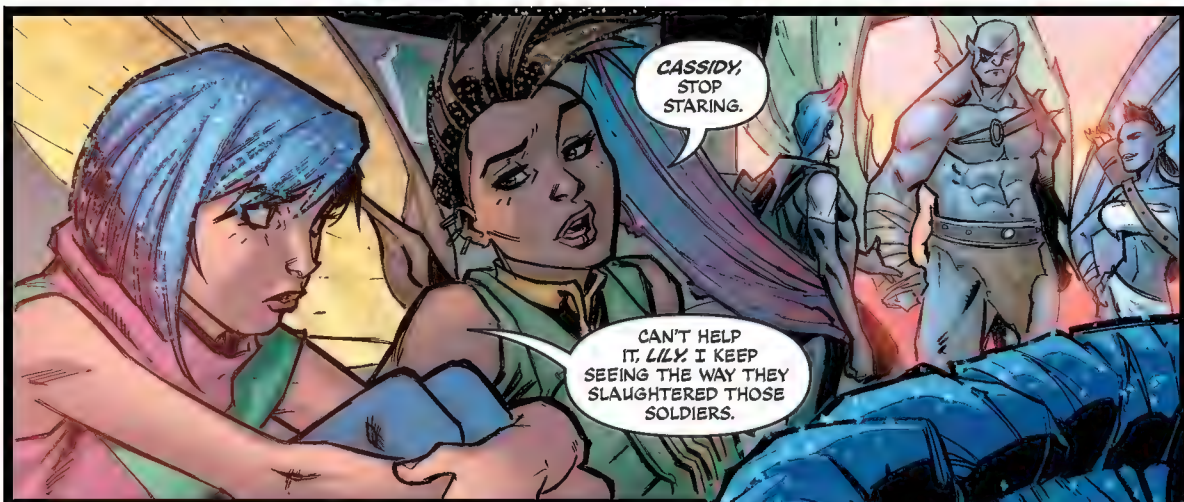
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SORRY, SONIA.
I'M USED TO *GRACE*
BEING THE FUN POLICE.
GUESS SHE'S GOT
A DEPUTY.

MAYBE, I'D
JUST RATHER WE
FOCUS ON LOOKING
OUT FOR THE LATEST
PSYCHO BEFORE HE
BLASTS US INTO
OBLIVION.

YEAH, BUT
EVERYTHING
IS ALL SO...
RUNDOWN.

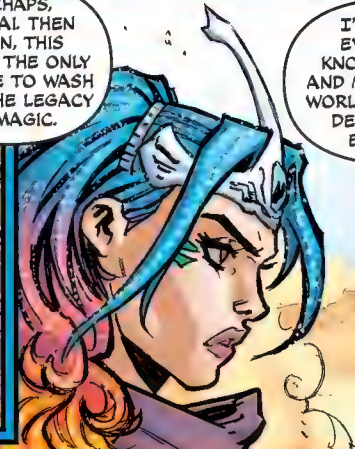
TIME HAS
A WAY OF
DOING THAT.

SENSORS
AREN'T PICKING
UP ANY FAMILIAR
FACES. MAYBE, WE
GUESSED WRONG
THIS TIME?

THE RELIC
JANUS TOOK FROM
THE MUSEUM WAS
EGYPTIAN IN ORIGIN,
BENOIST. IT WOULD
ONLY MAKE SENSE THAT
HE'D COME CLOSER TO
HOME TO FIND MORE.
RIGHT, GRACE?

PERHAPS,
MALIKAL THEN
AGAIN, THIS
WASN'T THE ONLY
CULTURE TO WASH
OVER THE LEGACY
OF MAGIC.

I'VE WATCHED
EVERYTHING I
KNOW TO BE TRUE
AND MAGICAL IN THIS
WORLD BE OBTUSCED,
DEFORMED, AND
ERADICATED.



ARE
YOU SAYING
WE SHOULD
BE LOOKING
ELSEWHERE?

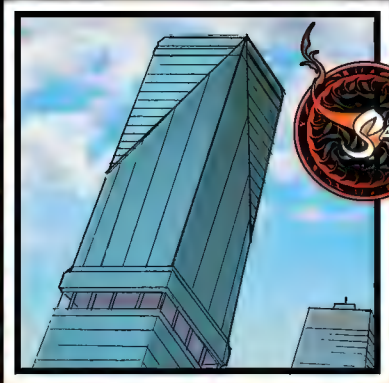
I'M SAYING THAT
EVERY CIVILIZATION
PRIDED THEMSELVES ON
BUILDING THEIR NEW
WORLDS ON TOP OF
THE OLD ONE.

PERHAPS,
IT'S ONLY JUST
IF THEY SHOULD
SUFFER THE
SAME FATE.



YOU'RE
TALKING
ANCIENT
HISTORY,
GRACE.

LIKE I SAID,
CAPTAIN OF THE
FUN POLICE.



WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, RAINIER...

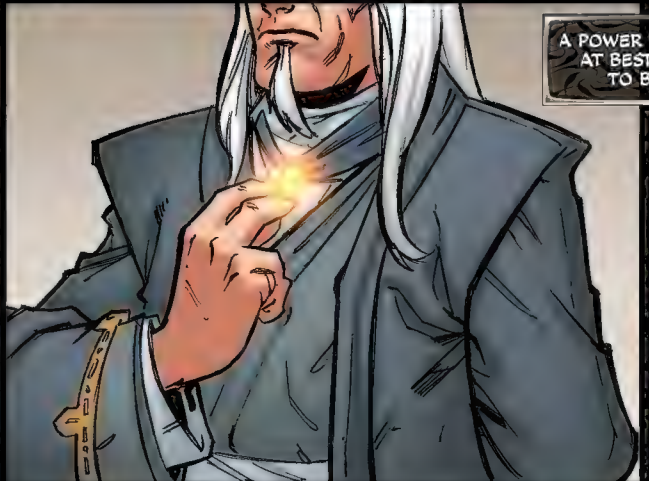
AS YOUR BOARD, WE ARE ENTITLED TO KNOW THE DETAILS REGARDING ANY VENTURE RAINIER INDUSTRIES ENGAGES IN. IT IS PART OF OUR DUTY TO YOU, TO THE COMPANY, AND TO ITS SHAREHOLDERS.

I CARE LITTLE FOR YOUR RESPECT OR YOUR DUTY. YOUR QUARTERLY REPORTS, MEMOS, AND MINUTIAE MEAN NOTHING TO ME. IT IS NOT WHAT MAKES THIS INDUSTRY THRIVE.



I DO. AND, YOU SERVE ME. REMEMBER THAT.

FOR CENTURIES, I EMBRACED THIS WORLD. THIS TECHNOLOGY. TRIED TO USE IT AS A MEANS TO POWER.



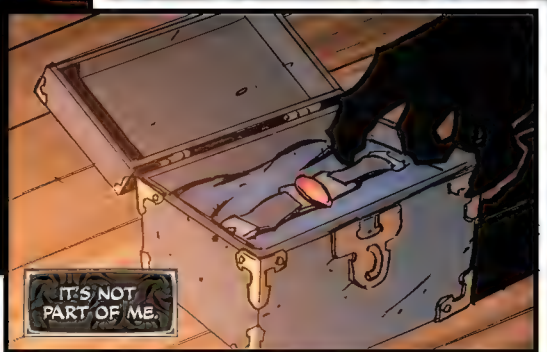
A POWER THAT WAS FLEETING AT BEST. IT ONLY WORKED TO BUILD A FACADE.



ONE I WAS BLINDED BY.



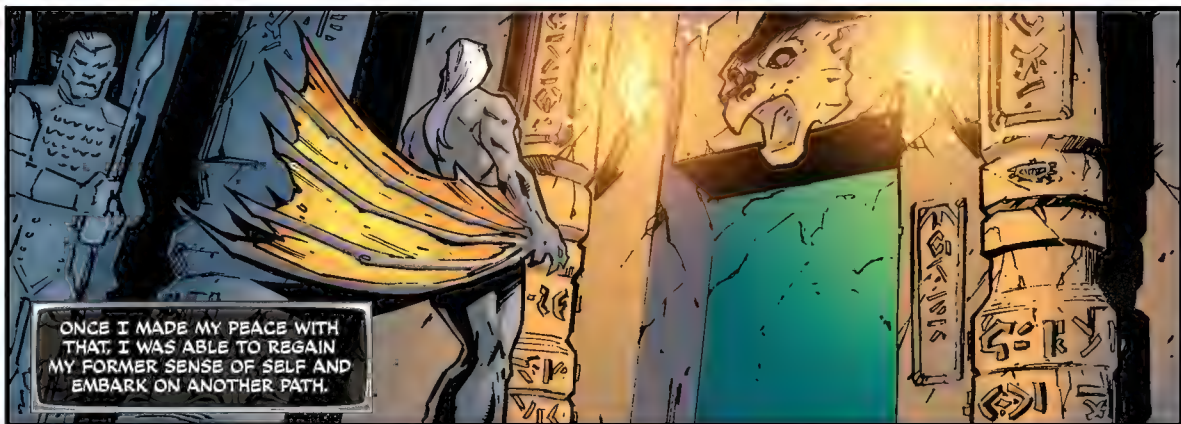
TECHNOLOGY WAS NEVER THE ANSWER.
IT ONLY TOOK ME FURTHER AND
FURTHER AWAY FROM THE TRUTH.



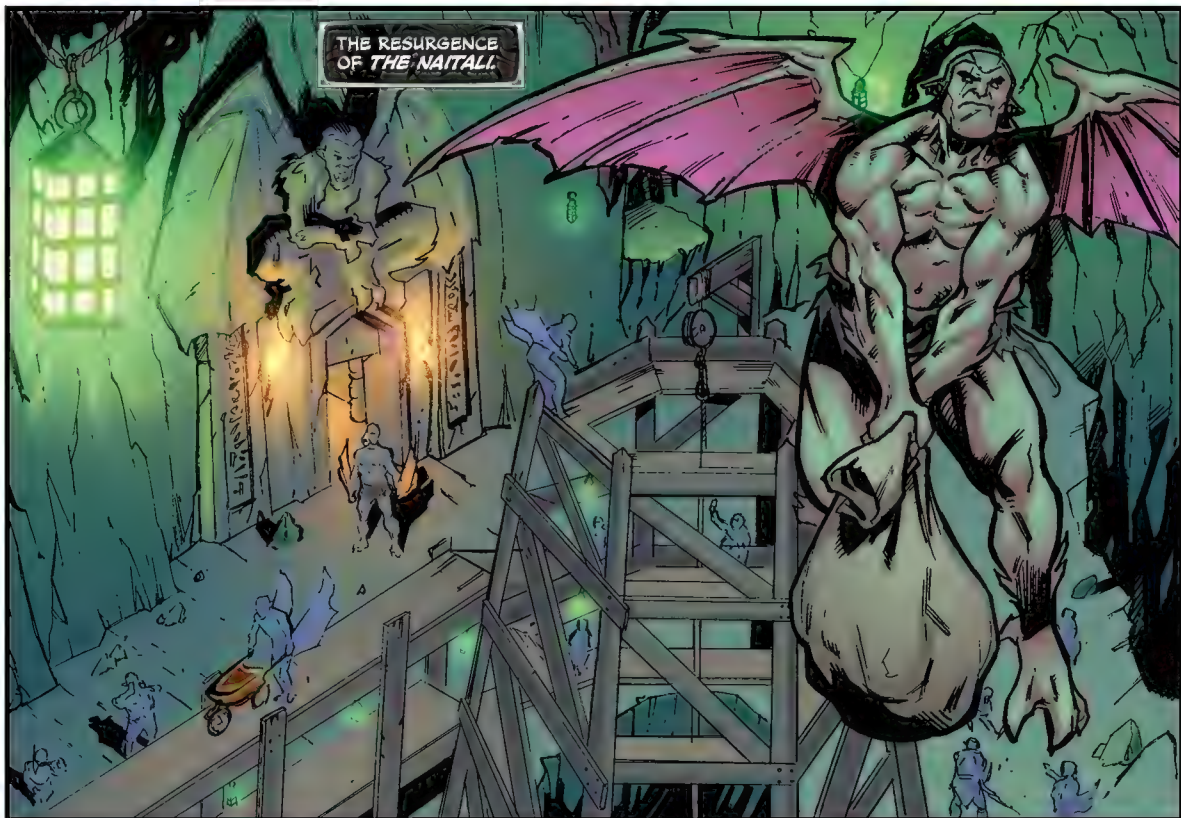
IT'S NOT
PART OF ME.

IT NEVER
WAS.





ONCE I MADE MY PEACE WITH THAT I WAS ABLE TO REGAIN MY FORMER SENSE OF SELF AND EMBARK ON ANOTHER PATH.



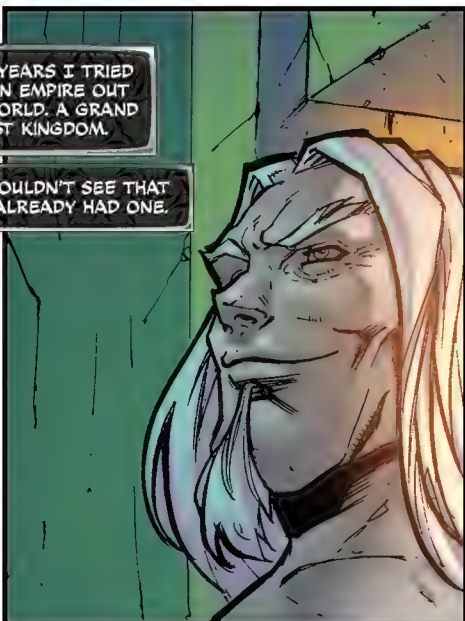
THE RESURGENCE OF THE NAITALL



THAT IS WHERE MY TRUE POWER LIES. THAT IS MY DESTINY.

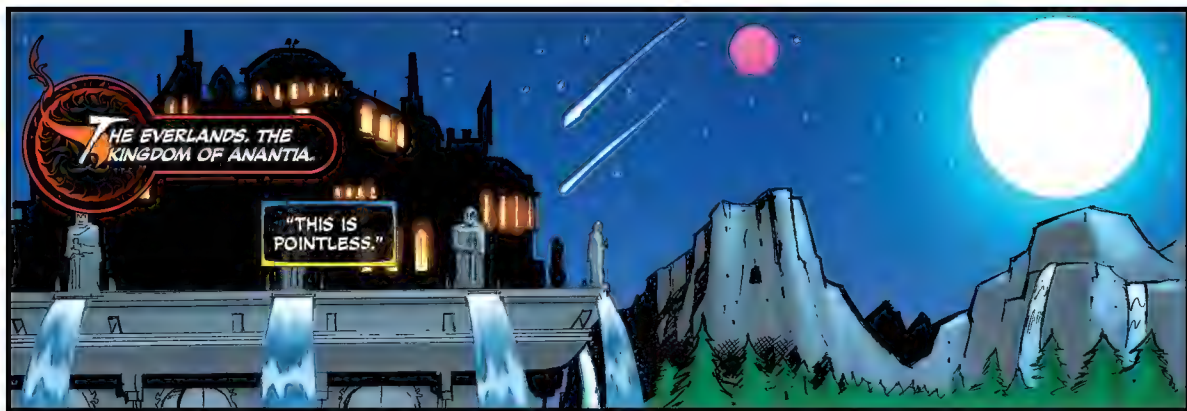
FOR COUNTLESS YEARS I TRIED TO BUILD MY OWN EMPIRE OUT IN THAT OTHER WORLD. A GRAND TOWER. A VAST KINGDOM.

I COULDN'T SEE THAT I ALREADY HAD ONE.



I SIMPLY
NEEDED TO
FIND IT.





THE EVERLANDS. THE KINGDOM OF ANANTIA.

"THIS IS POINTLESS."



I AM A KING. I SHOULDN'T BE WASTING MY TIME WITH MY HEAD BURIED IN THESE MOLDY OLD BOOKS.

THE ENTIRE HISTORY OF OUR UNIVERSE IS RECOUNTED IN THE PAGES FOUND IN THIS LIBRARY. **SARIN**. THE GREATEST SECRETS TO POWER. WAITING TO BE UNCOVERED.



NISABA, YOU HAVE SPENT YOUR ENTIRE LIFE ENGAGED IN SUCH STUDY, AND YET HERE WE ARE-- STRAINING OUR EYES UNDER CANDLELIGHT. STILL SEARCHING.

WHAT GOOD WILL INFINITE POWER DO ME IF I AM OLD AND GRAY LIKE YOU BY THE TIME I ACQUIRE IT?

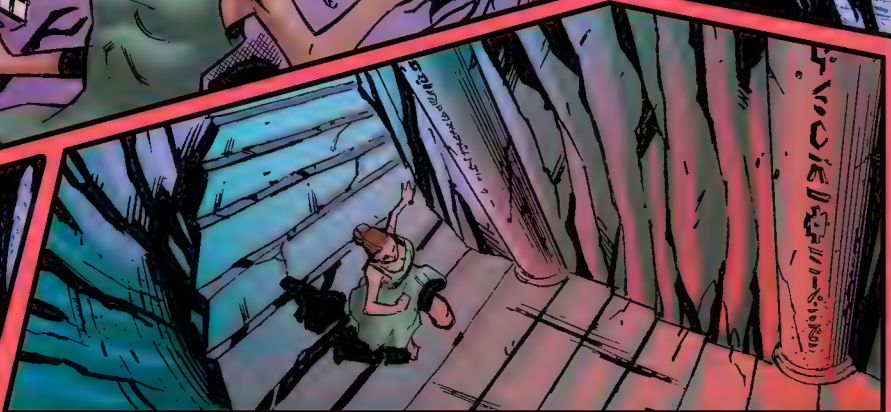
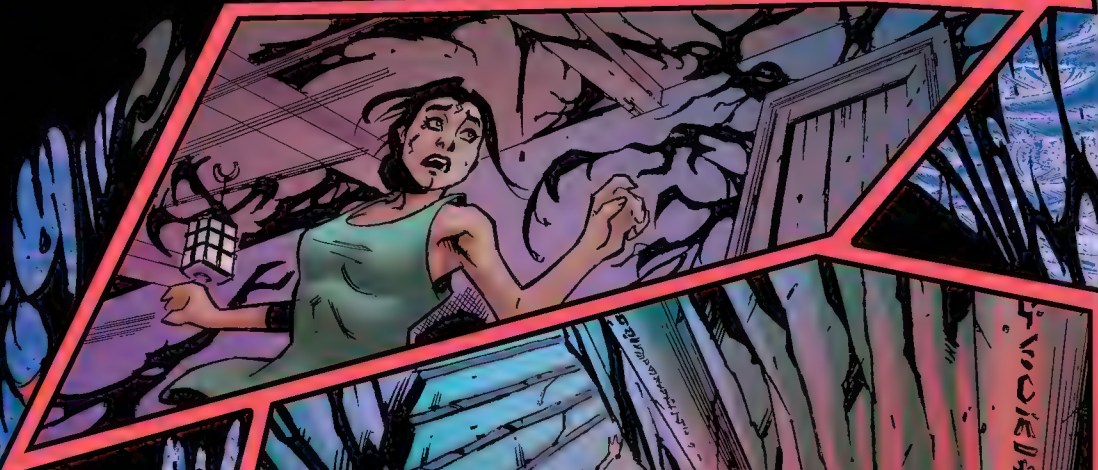
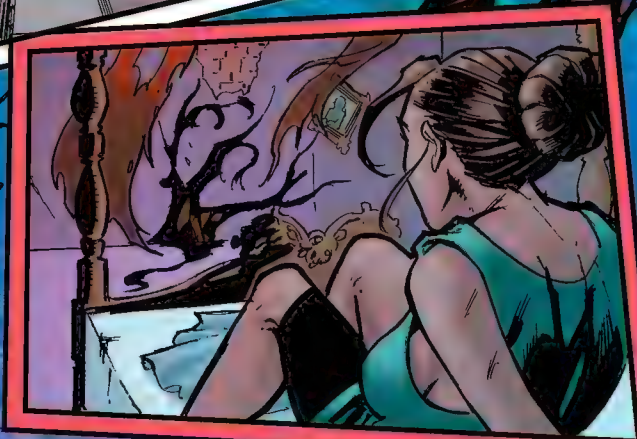
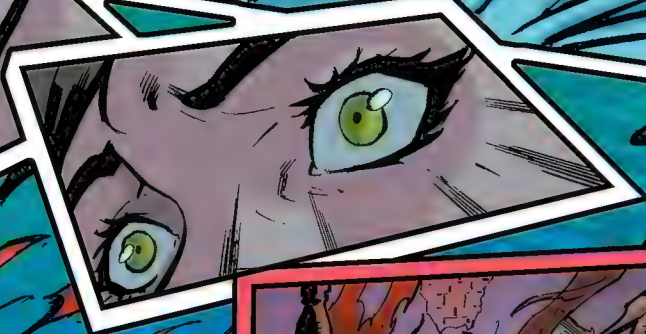


I DO NOT IMAGINE THAT **ONYX** FOCUSED ON SUCH PERSONAL VICTORIES WHEN SHE TAPPED INTO THE POWER OF THE SHADOW MAGIC IN ORDER TO LEAD ALL **SETHORU** TO THEIR SALVATION.



CAREFUL, **NISABA**. SUCH WORDS MIGHT SUGGEST YOU DO NOT HAVE MY BEST INTERESTS AT HEART. AS FOR ME, I AM DEDICATED TO MY PEOPLE.

AS LONG AS THEY ARE MY PEOPLE.





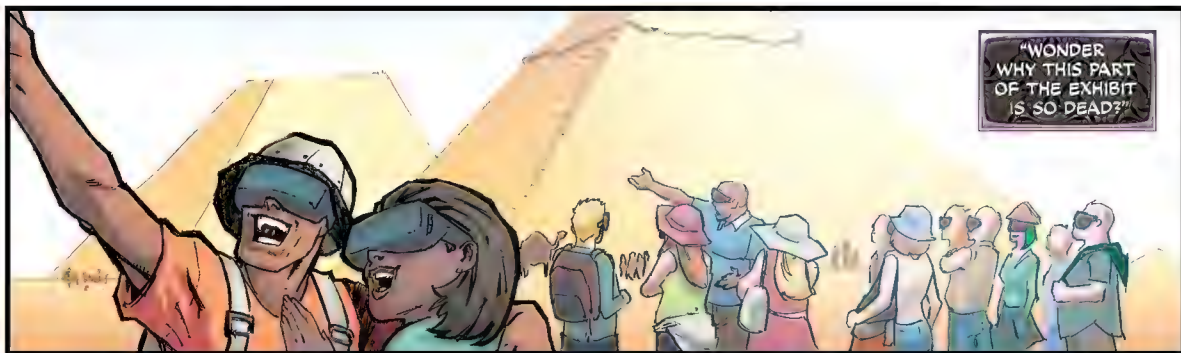
IT IS
GOOD TO SEE
YOU AGAIN,
EVANG.

ONYX...
Y-YOU
KILLED
THEM...

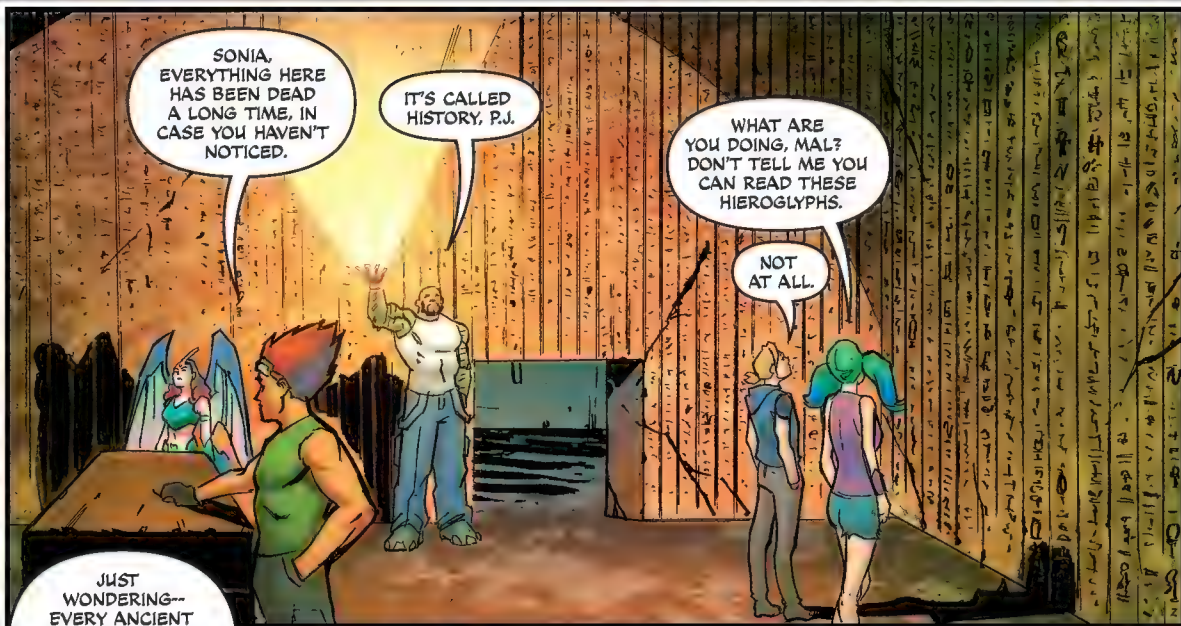
ME?
DON'T
YOU MEAN
YOU?

HNNH...

AHHH!



"WONDER WHY THIS PART OF THE EXHIBIT IS SO DEAD?"



SONIA, EVERYTHING HERE HAS BEEN DEAD A LONG TIME, IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED.

IT'S CALLED HISTORY, P.J.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING, MAL? DON'T TELL ME YOU CAN READ THESE HIEROGLYPHS.

NOT AT ALL.



JUST WONDERING-- EVERY ANCIENT CIVILIZATION HAD THEIR MYTHS AND LEGENDS, STORIES ABOUT GODS AND MONSTERS.

GIVEN EVERYTHING WE'VE EXPERIENCED, I'M THINKING MAYBE THEY WEREN'T SO FAR OFF, YOU KNOW?

UM, I HAVE LITTLE ENOUGH CONTROL IN MY LIFE AS IT IS, MAL. I DON'T NEED TO FEED THE NOTION OF SOME POWERFUL PEOPLE UPSTAIRS PULLING MY STRINGS.



I JUST MEANT THAT MAYBE THEY DID THE BEST THEY COULD, TRYING TO EXPLAIN THE UNEXPLAINABLE.

AN ALARM. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

WHAT'S THAT?

COME ON!





GUESS THEY
DECIDED TO DROP
THE WHOLE CLOAK
AND DAGGER
APPROACH.

STOP
THEM BEFORE
SOMEBODY
GETS HURT.

YOU CAN'T
EXPECT TO WIN
BY CHEATING WHEN
IT COMES TO
MAGIC.



P.J.I



CHUNKK

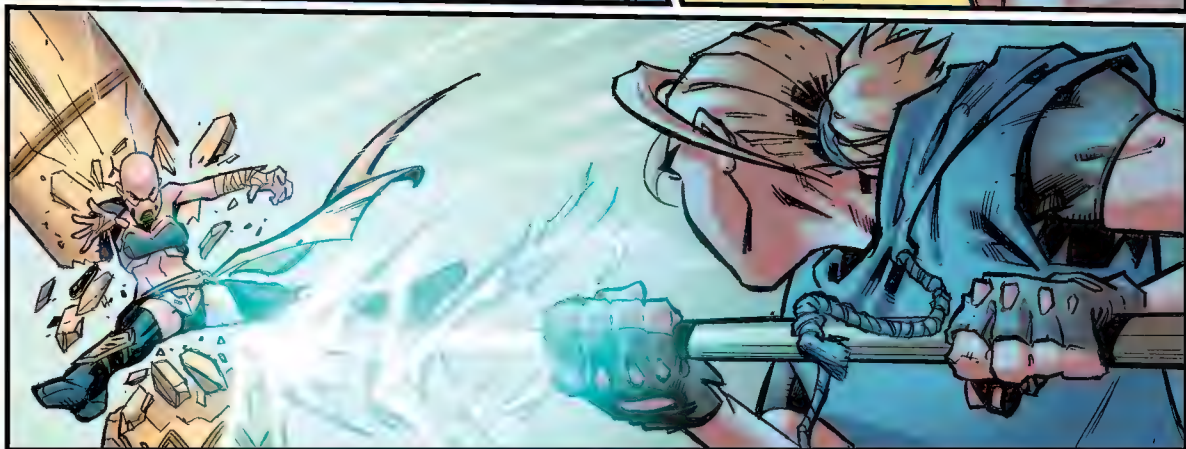
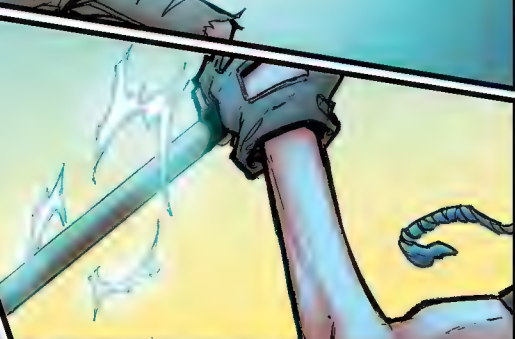
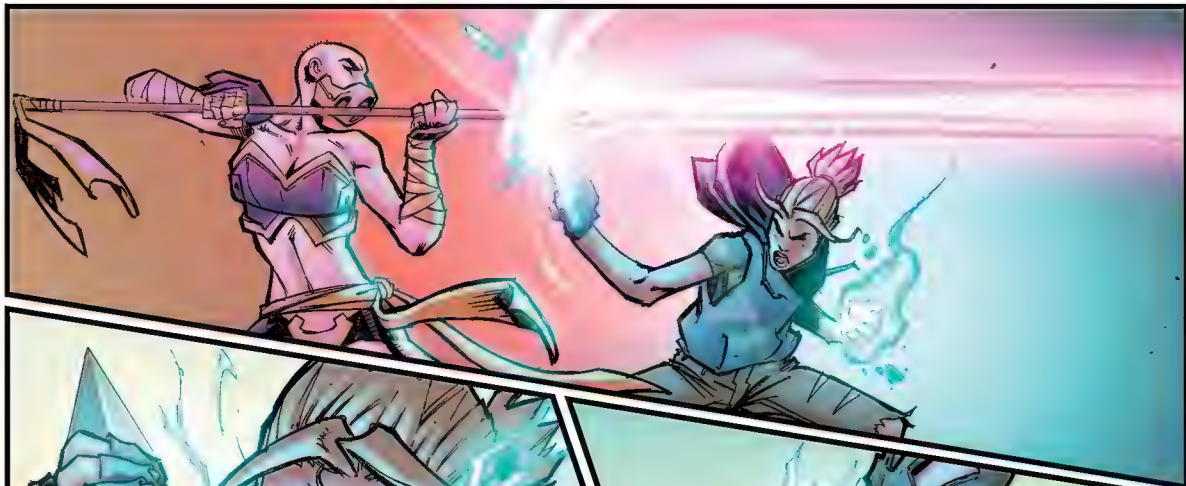
CHUNK
CHUNK

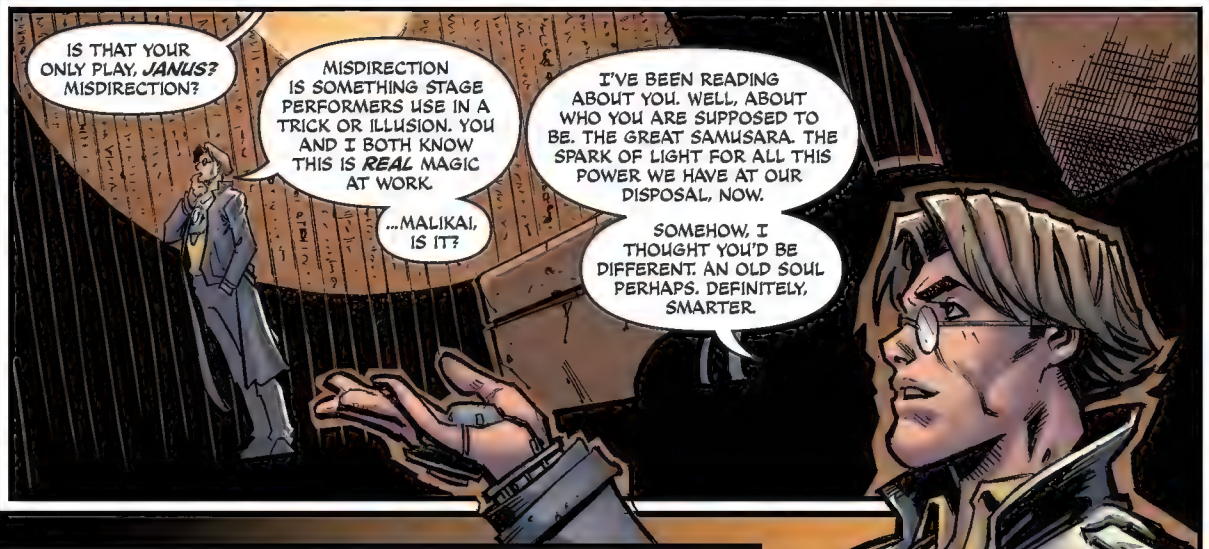
SORRY.
NOT USUALLY
MY THING. HITTING
WOMEN. BUT THEN
AGAIN, YOU'RE
ARMED.

SHUNKK-

UH-OH.

SO MUCH
HOSTILITY.





IS THAT YOUR ONLY PLAY, JANUS? MISDIRECTION?

MISDIRECTION IS SOMETHING STAGE PERFORMERS USE IN A TRICK OR ILLUSION. YOU AND I BOTH KNOW THIS IS *REAL* MAGIC AT WORK.

...MALIKAI, IS IT?

I'VE BEEN READING ABOUT YOU. WELL, ABOUT WHO YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO BE. THE GREAT SAMUSARA. THE SPARK OF LIGHT FOR ALL THIS POWER WE HAVE AT OUR DISPOSAL, NOW.

SOMEHOW, I THOUGHT YOU'D BE DIFFERENT. AN OLD SOUL PERHAPS. DEFINITELY, SMARTER.



I WAS SMART ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT I'D FIND YOU HERE.

I'M NOT SURE WHAT YOU ARE HOPING TO GAIN FROM ALL THIS. ATTACKING REN. STEALING THESE ARTIFACTS.



BUT, IT ENDS NOW.

FOR SOMEONE SO CONNECTED TO THE LIGHT...



YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A LIGHT SWITCH, MALIKAL LIKE A PIECE OF PLASTIC HANGING ON THE WALL.





...KNOWLEDGE
IS POWER.

TO BE
CONTINUED.



VOL. 7
COVER A

MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE

#5
OF 8





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Vol. 7

Cover B

MICHAEL TURNER'S
SOULFIRE

#**5**
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MAURITZ
SHAW

MICHAEL SOULFIRE™

**"RAW
POWER"**

Volume Seven : **PART 5 of 8**

Written by:

**J.T.
Krul**

In 2003, to mark the launch of its new publishing studio, Aspen Comics' Michael Turner put pencil to paper and went about creating a whole new world—a source of light in a female warrior, a source of dark in a monstrous mechanical dragon, and a source of power in the form of a seemingly ordinary boy who is anything but. Quickly joining the mega-hit Fathom, Soulfire has become one of Aspen's flagship properties, still going strong fifteen years later.

Cassidy and friends attempted to make sense of the arrival of their new allies, the Naitall, but the surge of discovery and chaos surrounding the young girl became too much for her to bear. Meanwhile, in Egypt within the Pyramids, Janus tipped the scales of magic in his favor, painfully revealing to Malikai the true power of his new magic...

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HELLO?
ANYBODY
THERE?

I NEVER ASKED
FOR THIS, YOU KNOW. WINGS.
MAGIC. NONE OF IT. I SHOULD BE
SITTING IN A CLASSROOM LEARNING
SOME LONG, DRAWN-OUT ALGEBRAIC
EQUATION THAT HAS NO PRACTICAL
APPLICATION IN MY LIFE. INSTEAD
OF BEING HERE. WHEREVER THIS
IS. NOT THAT I CAN TELL.

WHEN I
MENTIONED WANTING
ANSWERS, BLINDFOLDING
ME SEEMS TO BE A STEP IN
THE WRONG DIRECTION.
I'M LITERALLY IN
THE DARK.



GOOD LORD,
CASSIDY, WHAT'S
GOT INTO YOU?
YOUR MOUTH IS
RUNNING ON
OCTANE.

I TEND TO
RAMBLE ON THE
MORE NERVOUS OR
ANXIOUS I GET, SO
YOU DO THE
MATH, *LILY*.

RELAX, *CASSIDY*.
IF THEY WANTED US
DEAD, THEY PROBABLY
WOULDN'T HAVE SAVED
US BACK IN LOS
ANGELES.

THANKS,
MILO, I FEEL
TOTALLY
RELAXED,
NOW.

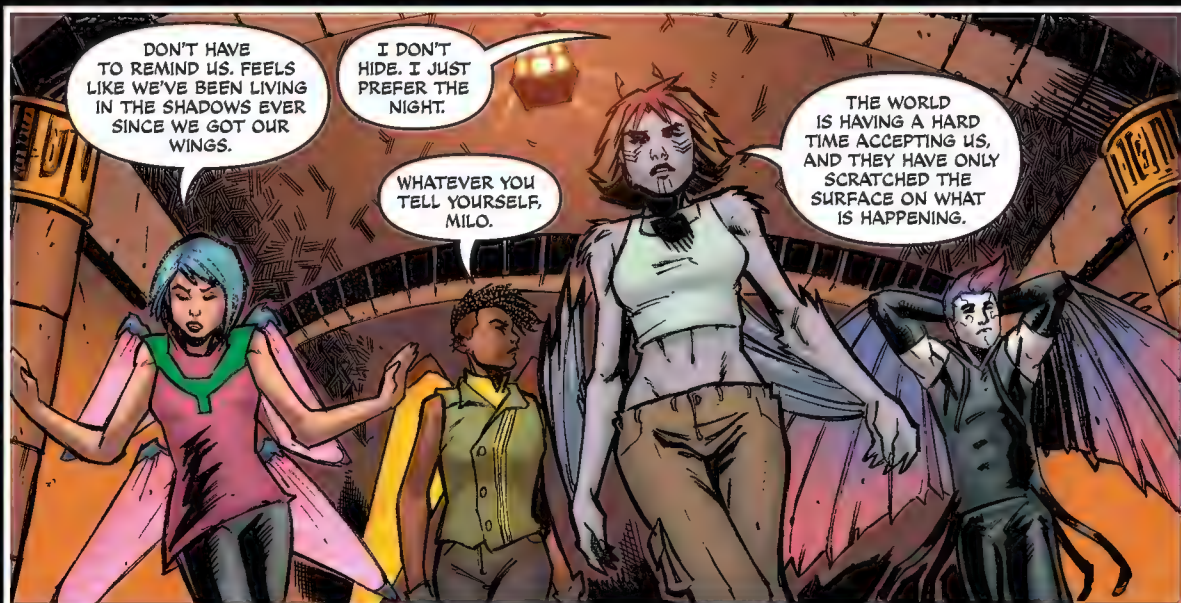


I THINK
YOU CAN
TAKE THOSE
OFF NOW.



AFTER ALL,
YOU'RE NOT
PRISONERS.





"IN THE VERY BEGINNING, THE WORLD WAS FORMED FROM ORDER AND CHAOS. A MASSIVE CONFLICT THAT SPARKED MAGIC INTO EXISTENCE, AND THAT ENERGY GAVE BIRTH TO THE DRAGONS. CREATURES WHOSE VERY LIFEBLOOD IS CONNECTED TO ITS POWER.

"FROM THERE, TIME PASSED, LIFE EVOLVED, AND THE NAITALI WERE BORN. THE CHILDREN OF THE DRAGONS. FOR EONS, THEY THRIVED AND SOARED IN THE SKIES.

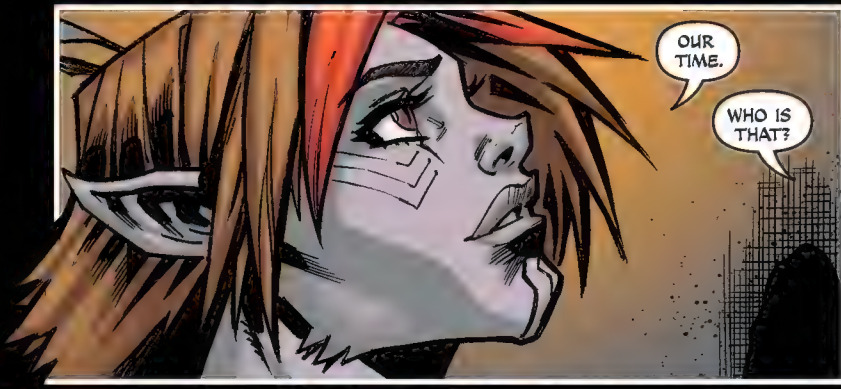
"THEN MORE CREATURES WERE CREATED, IN THE SKY, ON THE LAND, IN THE SEA, AMONG THEM, THE SETHORU AND THE RAHTUMI. LESS CONNECTED TO THE DRAGONS AND THE MAGIC, BUT POWERFUL NONETHELESS. THEY ROSE AND MULTIPLIED, EMPOWERED THROUGH THEIR SHEER NUMBER.



"THEY RESPECTED THE DRAGONS BUT NOT THE NAITALI. TO THEM, THEY WERE MONSTERS TO BE DESTROYED.

"THE SETHORU AND RAHTUMI CLAIMED THE WORLD FOR THEMSELVES AND FOUGHT FOR SUPREMACY UNTIL THE AGE OF MAGIC ENDED. THEIR LIGHT FADED AND THE TIME OF HUMANS BEGAN. WITHOUT MAGIC, THEY TURNED TO TECHNOLOGY AND COVERED THE GLOBE WITH THEIR CIVILIZATIONS, TRYING TO ERASE ALL THAT HAD COME BEFORE.

"BUT, LIFE IS A CIRCLE, AND NOW THAT THE MAGIC HAS RETURNED, THE NAITALI HAVE AS WELL. AND, THEIR TIME TO STEP BACK INTO THE LIGHT IS AT HAND.



OUR
TIME.

WHO IS
THAT?



HIS NAME
IS RAINIER.

WHEN THAT JOLT
HAPPENED-- AND THE
ENERGY OF THE MAGIC
SURGED THROUGH ME,
MY LIFE WAS TURNED
UPSIDE DOWN.

I CAN
RELATE.

I MET NEW
PEOPLE LIKE YOU.
OTHERS WHO HAVE BEEN
TOUCHED BY THE MAGIC.
BUT, RAINIER WAS THE ONE
WHO REALLY OPENED
MY EYES.



HE HAS
ENDURED OVER THE
CENTURIES, SUFFERED
UNBEARABLE TORTURE AND
MUTILATION. HIS VERY
FORM WAS TAKEN
FROM HIM.

HE LOOKED TO
TECHNOLOGY TO FIX HIS
BROKEN SPIRIT, BUT IT COULD
ONLY DO SO MUCH. WHEN HE
FULLY EMBRACED THE MAGIC
AND ITS POWER, ONLY THEN
DID HE REGAIN HIS
TRUE FORM...

AND REALIZE
HIS TRUE DESTINY.
TO LEAD THE NAITALI
BACK TO THEIR
FORMER GLORY.



AND THAT'S
WHAT THIS
PLACE IS ALL
ABOUT?

YES.



"A NEW
BEGINNING."



ASUNA,
LISTEN TO ME.
YOU'RE BEING USED.
DON'T YOU SEE
THAT?

WHAT I SEE
IS THAT I CAN GO
TOE-TO-TOE WITH YOU
NOW, *GRACE*. IF THAT'S
A SIGN OF ME BEING
USED, I CAN LIVE
WITH THAT.

CAN
YOU?

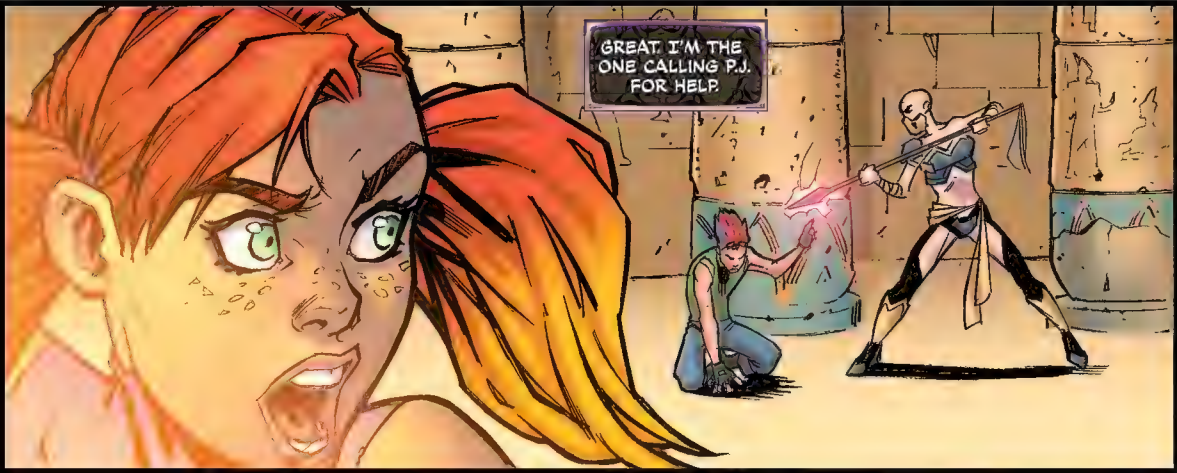
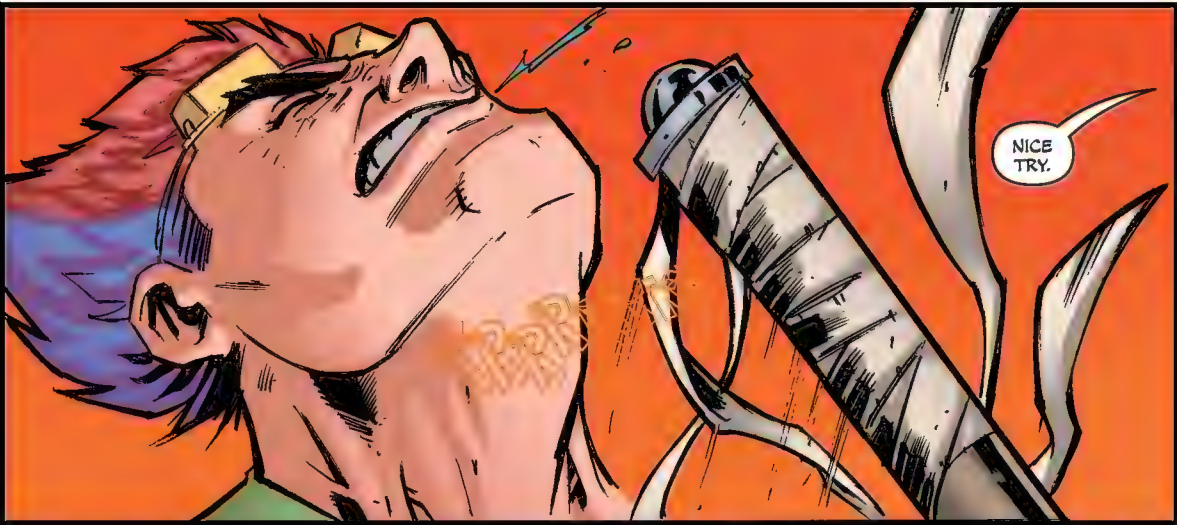
YOUR SKILLS
ARE WASTED ON
ME. YOU'D BE KILLER
AT THE SUSHI BAR.
PROBABLY SHOULDN'T
USE THE WORD
"KILLER." HUH?

P.J. A
LITTLE HELP
HERE!

I'M COMING.
JUST GRABBING
SOMETHING
FIRST.

I'M NOT
THE TYPE OF GUY
TO PASS UP GETTING
MY HANDS ON A
NEW TOY.





OR, HE'S FOUND
MORE TROUBLE.

NNNNN.

DO YOU KNOW
WHAT YOUR
PROBLEM IS,
MALIKAI?

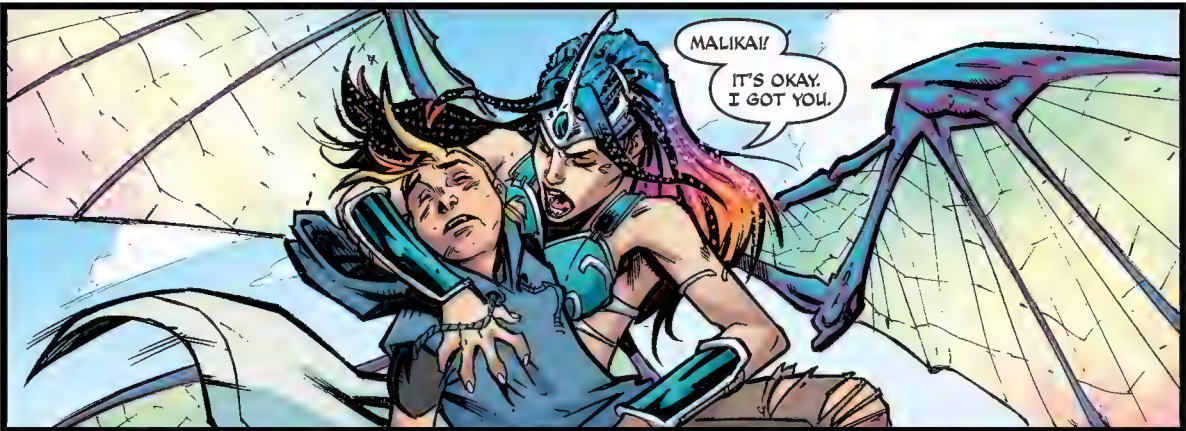
SUCH DELUSIONS
OF GRANDEUR. YOU THINK
YOU ARE SO VITAL TO THIS
MAGICAL ENERGY COURSE
THROUGH OUR WORLD.
YOU'RE NOT.

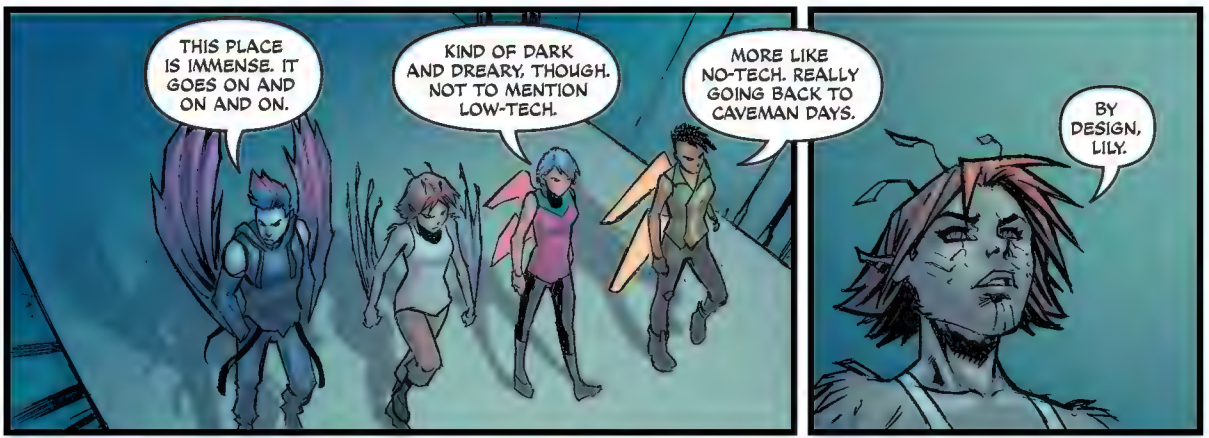
THIS POWER IS
RAW AND PURE. JUST
LIKE OTHER NATURAL
FORCES AT PLAY. STORMS
IN THE SKY. A RAGING
VOLCANO. A TSUNAMI.
GRAVITY.

YET YOU TRY
TO CONTROL IT.
TRY TO SHAPE IT AND
DETERMINE WHO CAN
ACCESS IT AND WHO
CANNOT. IT IS NOT
YOUR DECISION.

CATALYST
THAT YOU MAY
BE, YOU ARE NO
GATEKEEPER.

THE MAGIC
DOES NOT
BELONG TO
YOU.





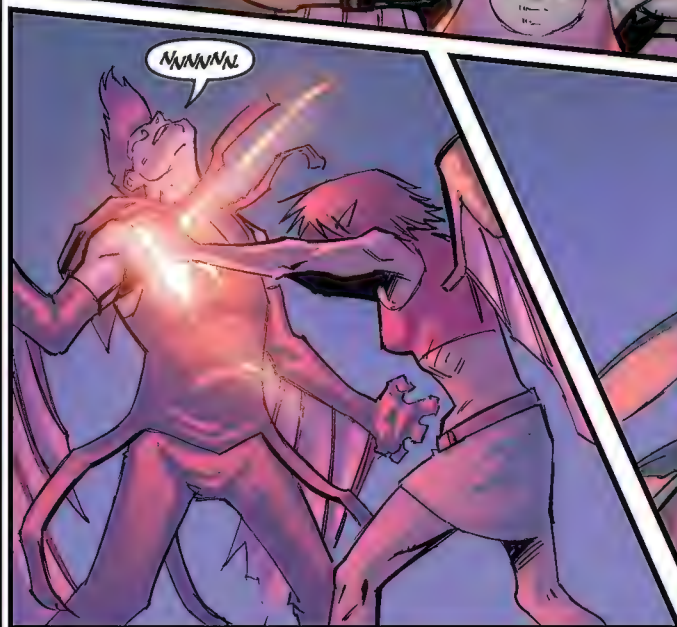
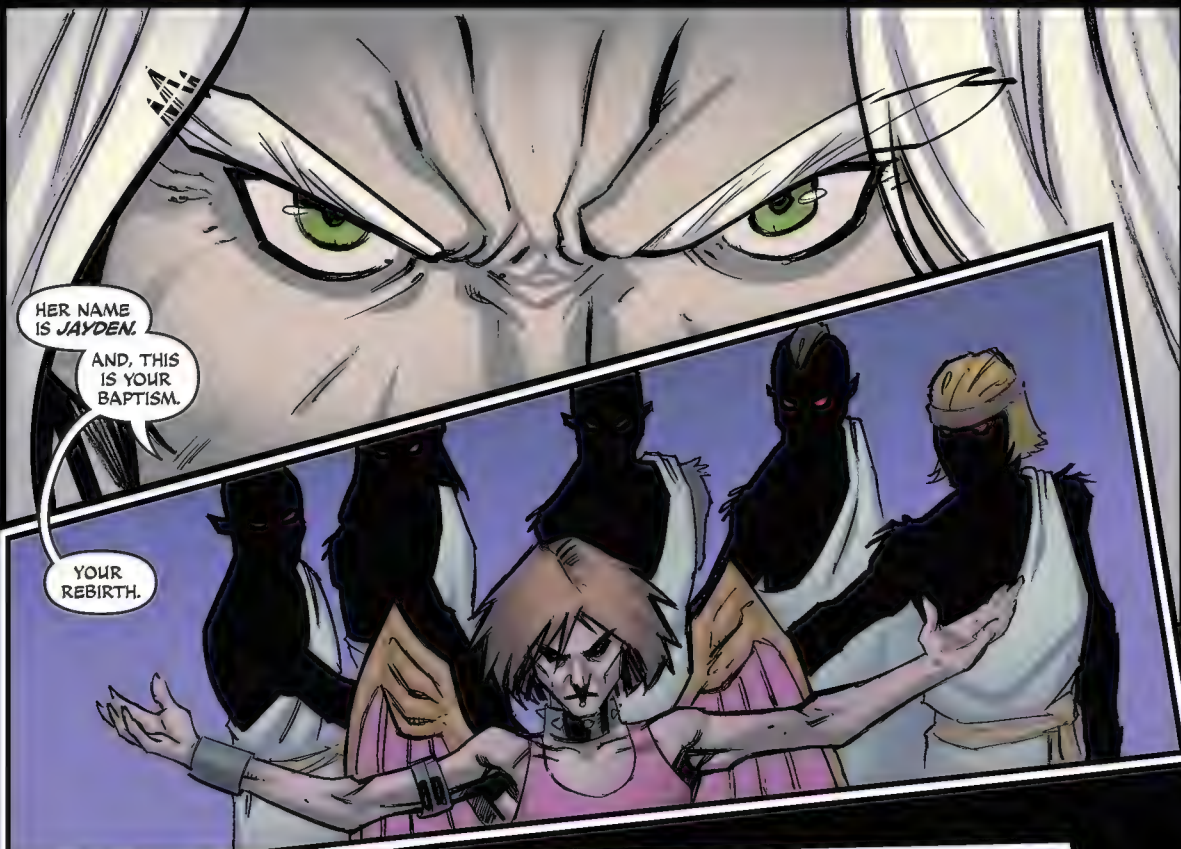


HE HAS
A DATE WITH
DESTINY.

HEY
GUYS. WHAT'S
HAPPENING?



WH-WHO
ARE YOU? WHAT
IS THIS?



"WE ARE
FREEING HIM."

NNNNNN...

AHHHHHH!

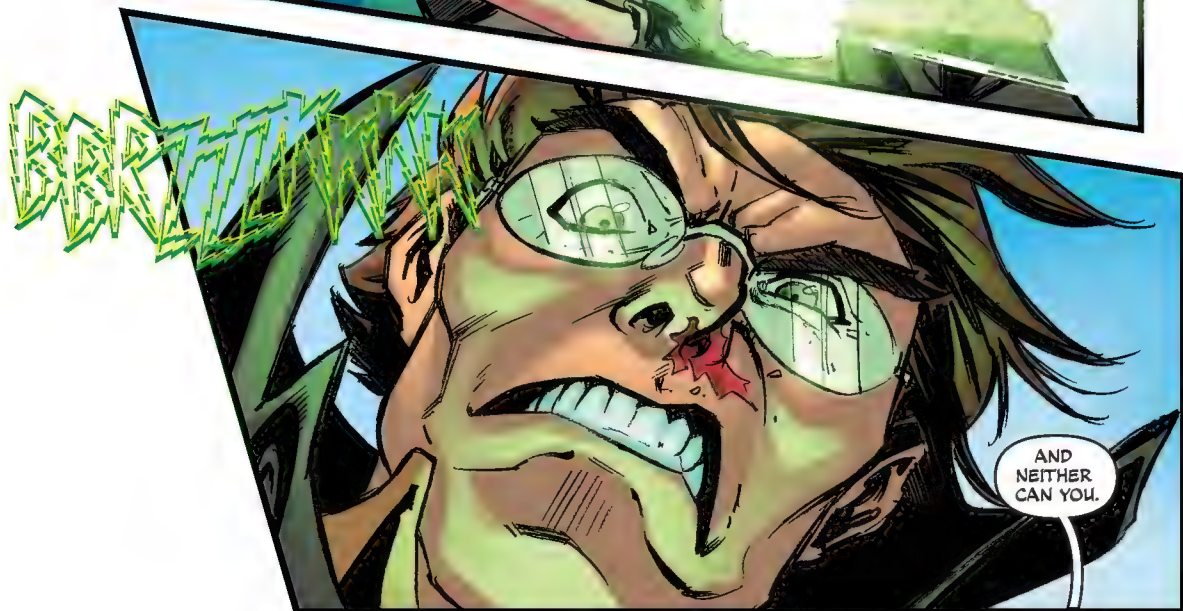
MILO?

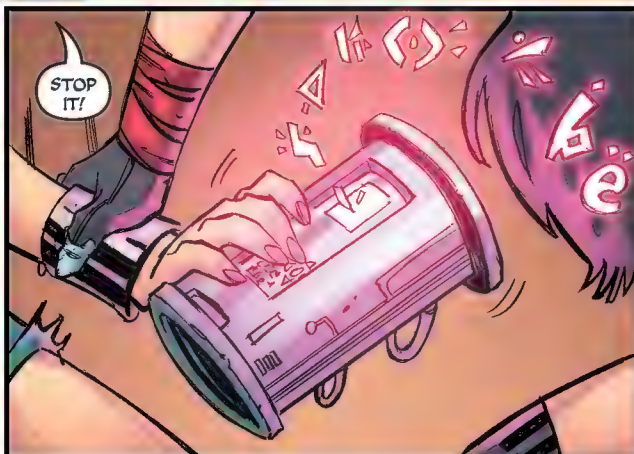
ARE--
ARE YOU
OKAY?!

NEVER
BETTER,
LADIES.















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Cover B

SOULFIRE

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MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE™

**"SITUATION
CRITICAL"**

Volume Seven: **PART 6 of 8**

Written by:

**J.T.
Krul**

In 2003, to mark the launch of its new publishing studio, Aspen Comics' Michael Turner put pencil to paper and went about creating a whole new world—a source of light in a strong female warrior, a source of dark in a monstrous mechanical dragon, and a source of power in the form of a seemingly ordinary boy who is anything but. Quickly joining the mega-hit Fathom, Soulfire has become one of Aspen's flagship properties, still going strong fifteen years later.

Taken deep into a secret lair within Devil's Tower, Cassidy, Lily and Milo were greeted by the Naitali Vanyss, one of Rainier's acolytes.

She escorted Milo to the vampiric magic wielder, Jayden, who much to the girls' dismay, transformed him into his full, true Naitali form.

Meanwhile in Egypt, Grace and the crew continued their battle with Janus and the traitorous Furies. While most of Janus' team got away unscathed, Sonia was able to disarm the

Fury Mie, removing her magic manipulation device, resulting in an explosion that knocked both Mie and Sonia unconscious...

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**Mark Roslan
& Justice**

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**Wes
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Lettering by:

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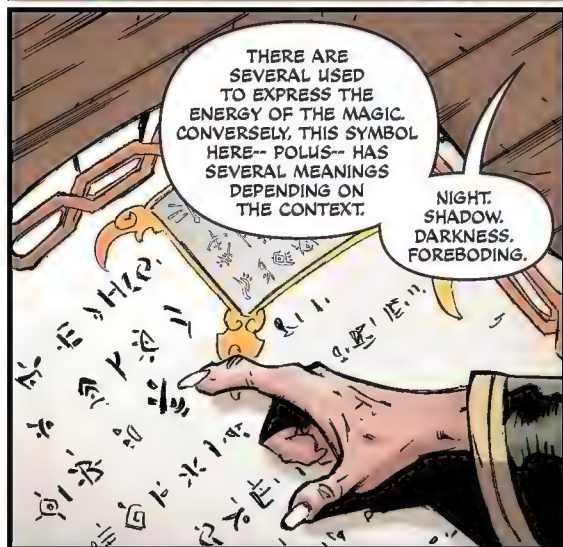
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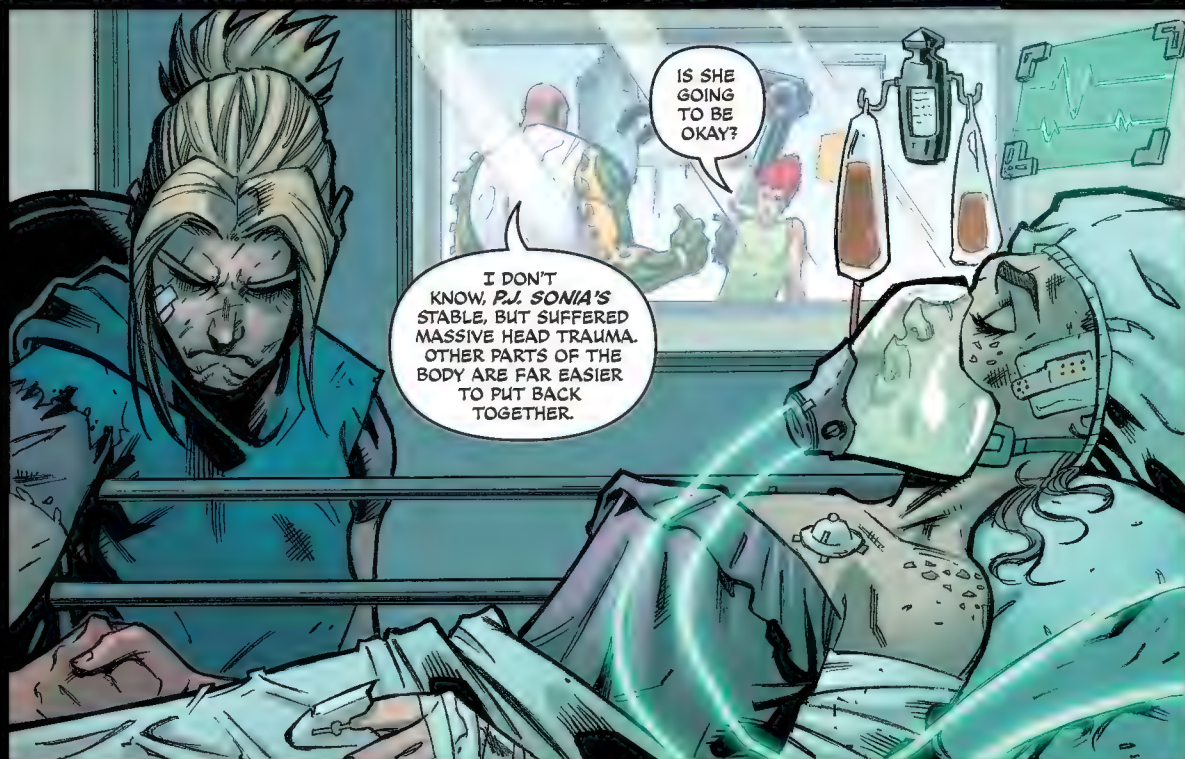


AN OBSTACLE.

EVANI! COME
HERE. I WANT
TO SHOW YOU
SOMETHING.









THIS IS
ALL MY
FAULT.

YOU WARNED ME
ABOUT GETTING CAUGHT
UP IN SOME NEW CRUSADE,
SONIA. YOU TOLD ME NOT
TO GO AROUND POLICING
MAGIC. I'M SO SORRY
I DIDN'T LISTEN.

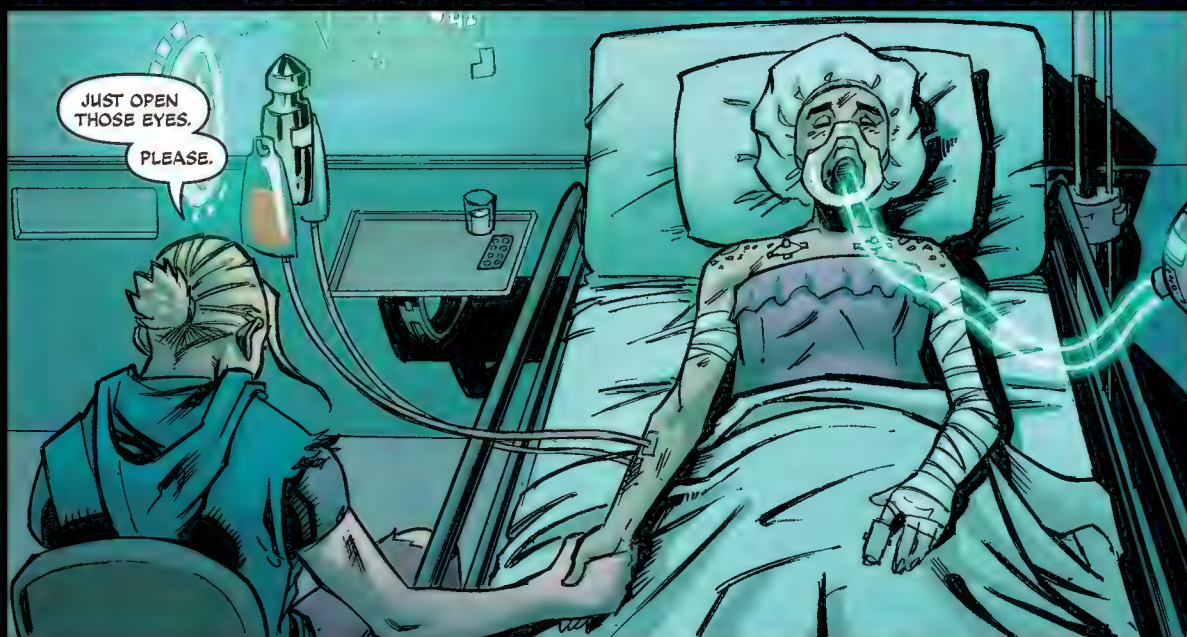
YOU REALLY
SHOULD WAKE UP,
NOW. YOU'RE NEVER
GOING TO GET A
BETTER OPPORTUNITY
TO SAY I TOLD
YOU SO.

I CAN SEE
IT, NOW. YOU'D MAKE
A BIG PERFORMANCE OF
IT. SHOW A LOT OF FLAIR.
YOU LIKE FLAIR. IT'S ONE
OF THE REASONS I
LOVE YOU.



ONE OF
MANY.

SO, ANYTIME
YOU ARE READY.
I'M HERE.
WAITING.



JUST OPEN
THOSE EYES.

PLEASE.

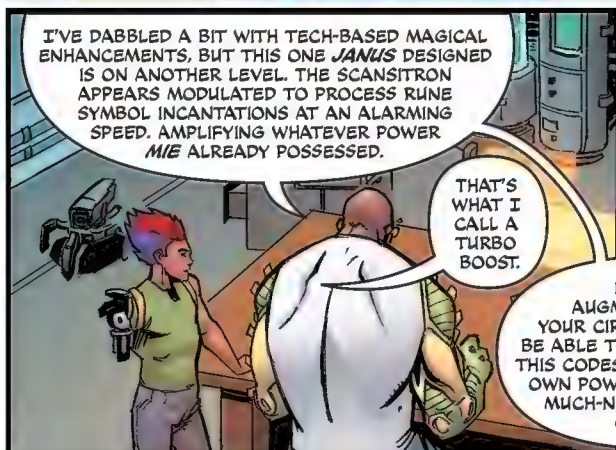


NOW THAT YOU GOT ME ALL PICKED APART-- EXACTLY WHAT KIND OF UPGRADE ARE YOU THINKING OF, *BENOIST*?



WE NEED MORE FIREPOWER. SOMETHING MORE DURABLE, TOO. A GUN CAN ALWAYS BE KNOCKED FROM YOUR HAND.

UNLESS YOUR GUN IS YOUR HAND.



I'VE DABBLED A BIT WITH TECH-BASED MAGICAL ENHANCEMENTS, BUT THIS ONE *JANUS* DESIGNED IS ON ANOTHER LEVEL. THE SCANSITRON APPEARS MODULATED TO PROCESS RUNE SYMBOL INCANTATIONS AT AN ALARMING SPEED. AMPLIFYING WHATEVER POWER *MIE* ALREADY POSSESSED.

THAT'S WHAT I CALL A TURBO BOOST.

IF WE CAN AUGMENT SOME OF YOUR CIRCUITRY, WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO LET YOU TAP INTO THIS CODESTREAM. BOOST YOUR OWN POWER. GIVE YOU SOME MUCH-NEEDED OFFENSIVE CAPABILITY.



IT'S SPREADING.

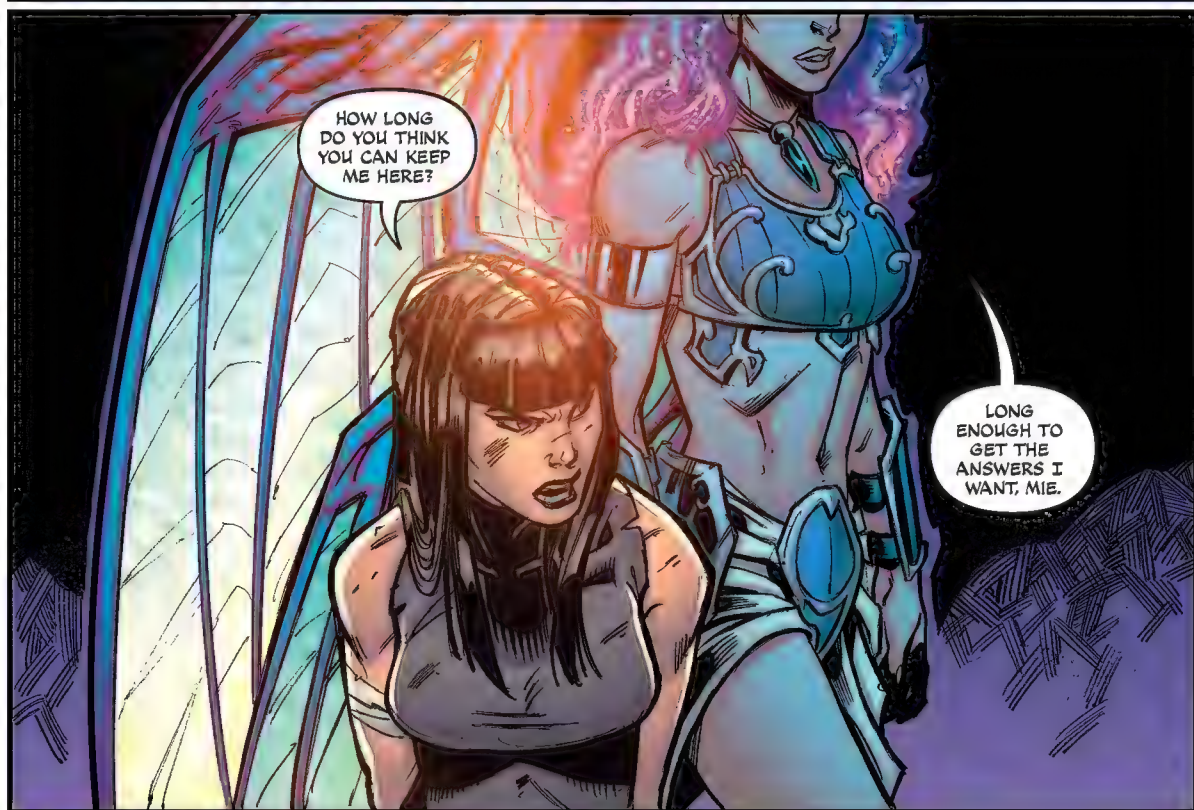
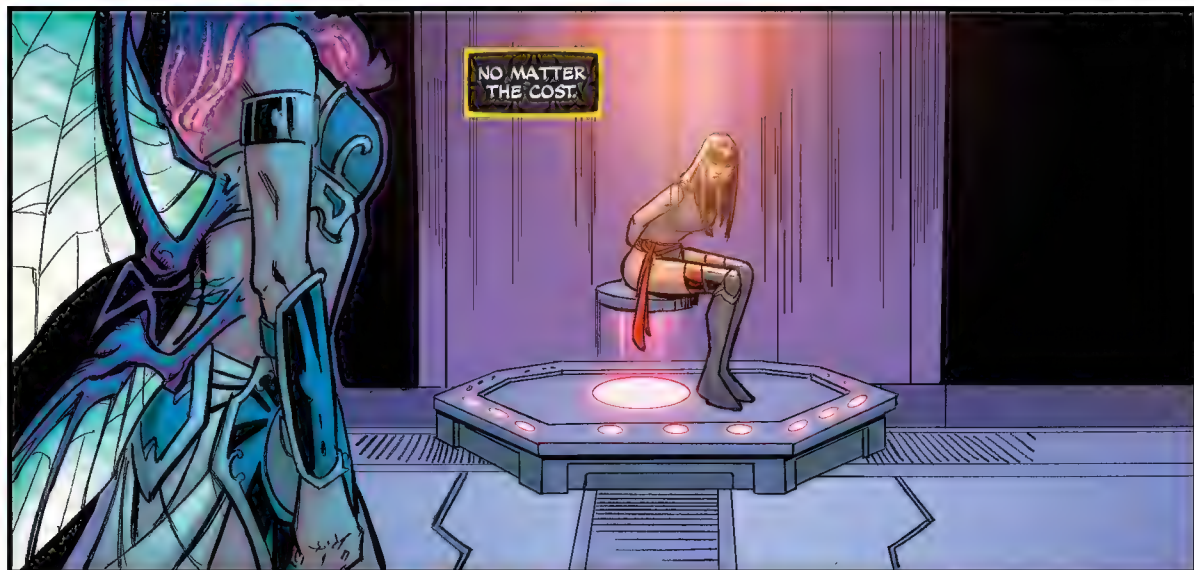


JANUS IS DEFILING THE VERY ESSENCE OF MAGIC. CHEATING IT.

THIS BASTARDIZATION OF TECHNOLOGY AND MAGIC IS HERESY. A POISON.



IT HAS TO BE STOPPED BEFORE IT TAKES HOLD. BEFORE IT DESTROYS EVERYTHING I HAVE SPENT A LIFETIME PROTECTING.





I JUST
WANT TO
GIVE YOU A
FIGHTING
CHANCE.

NNNNNNN



STOP.
JUST
STOP.

DON'T WORRY.
IT'S ALMOST
OVER, MIE.

I DON'T
KNOW WHAT
COMPELLED
YOU TO BETRAY
REN. A LUST FOR
POWER. MONEY.
GLORY.

BUT, I *DO*
KNOW WHY YOU
ARE GOING TO
BETRAY JANUS.

STAY AWAY
FROM ME!

AHHHHH!







WITH SO MUCH ACTIVITY GOING ON, RAINIER, I AM SURPRISED YOU CAN STAY ON TOP OF EVERYTHING.

I'VE HAD PLENTY OF PRACTICE. BESIDES, **VANYSS**— THIS IS THE ONLY THING THAT REALLY MATTERS RIGHT NOW.

WHAT'S DOWN THERE?

THE KEY TO OUR FUTURE.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?



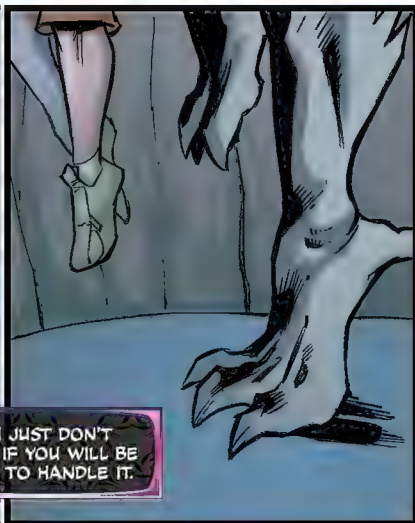
EVERY INTERACTION WITH RAINIER BRINGS WITH IT A CERTAIN APPREHENSION.

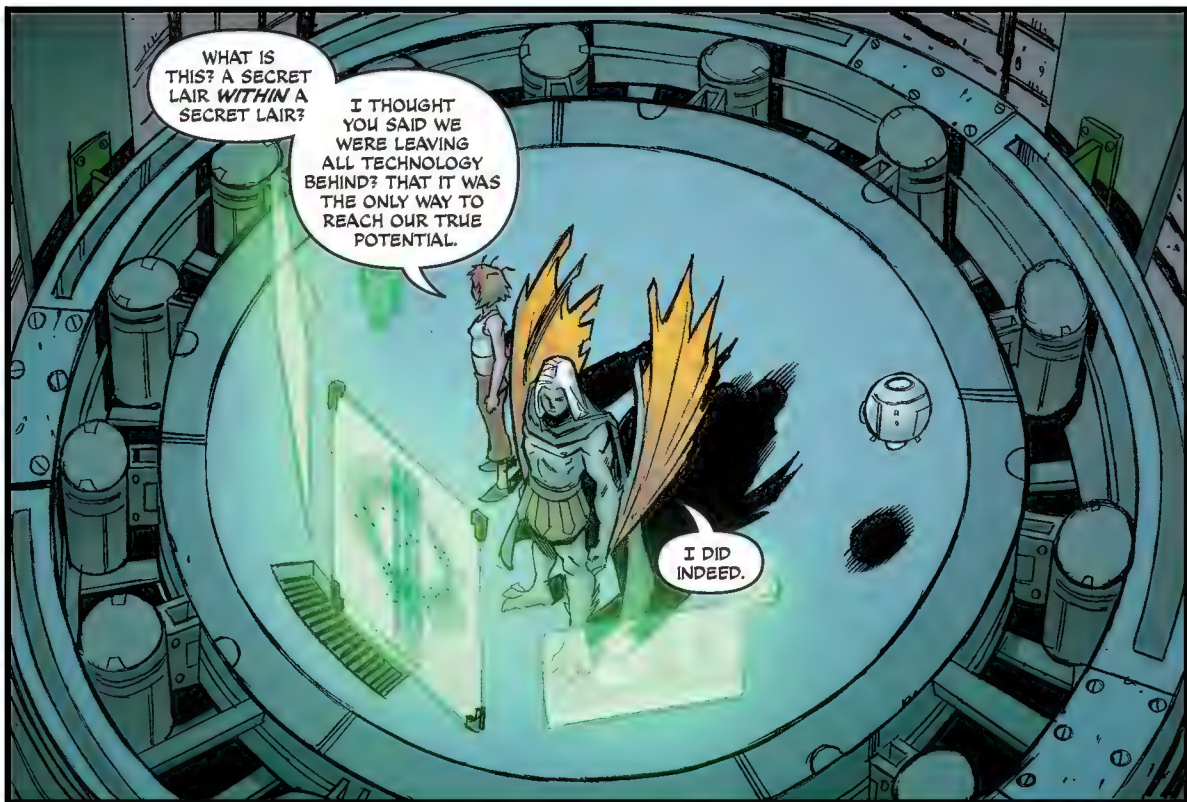


HE HAS THIS WAY OF FILLING YOU WITH A SENSE OF INTRIGUE AND FEAR AT THE SAME TIME. YOU WANT TO FOLLOW HIM. YOU WANT TO LEARN WHAT HE HAS TO TEACH.



YOU JUST DON'T KNOW IF YOU WILL BE ABLE TO HANDLE IT.





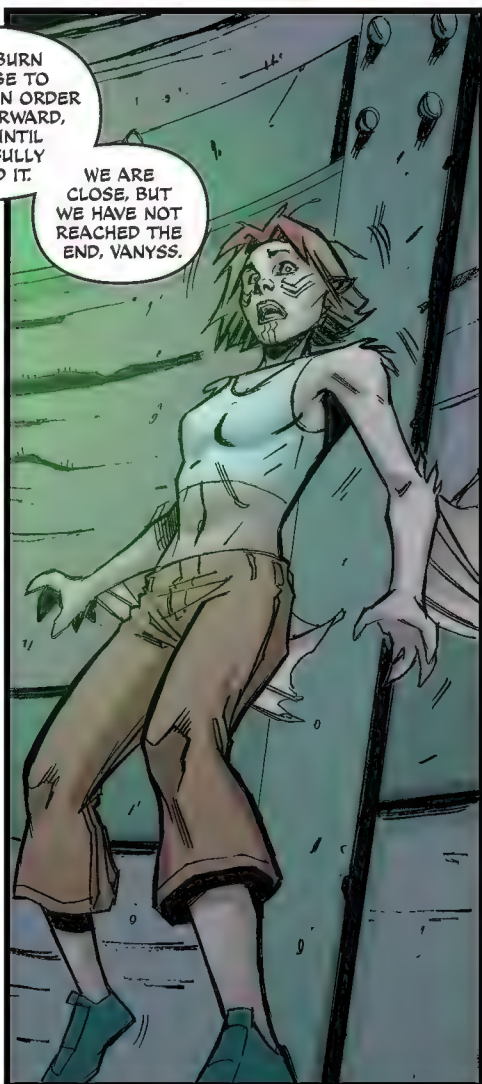
WHAT IS THIS? A SECRET LAIR *WITHIN* A SECRET LAIR?

I THOUGHT YOU SAID WE WERE LEAVING ALL TECHNOLOGY BEHIND? THAT IT WAS THE ONLY WAY TO REACH OUR TRUE POTENTIAL.

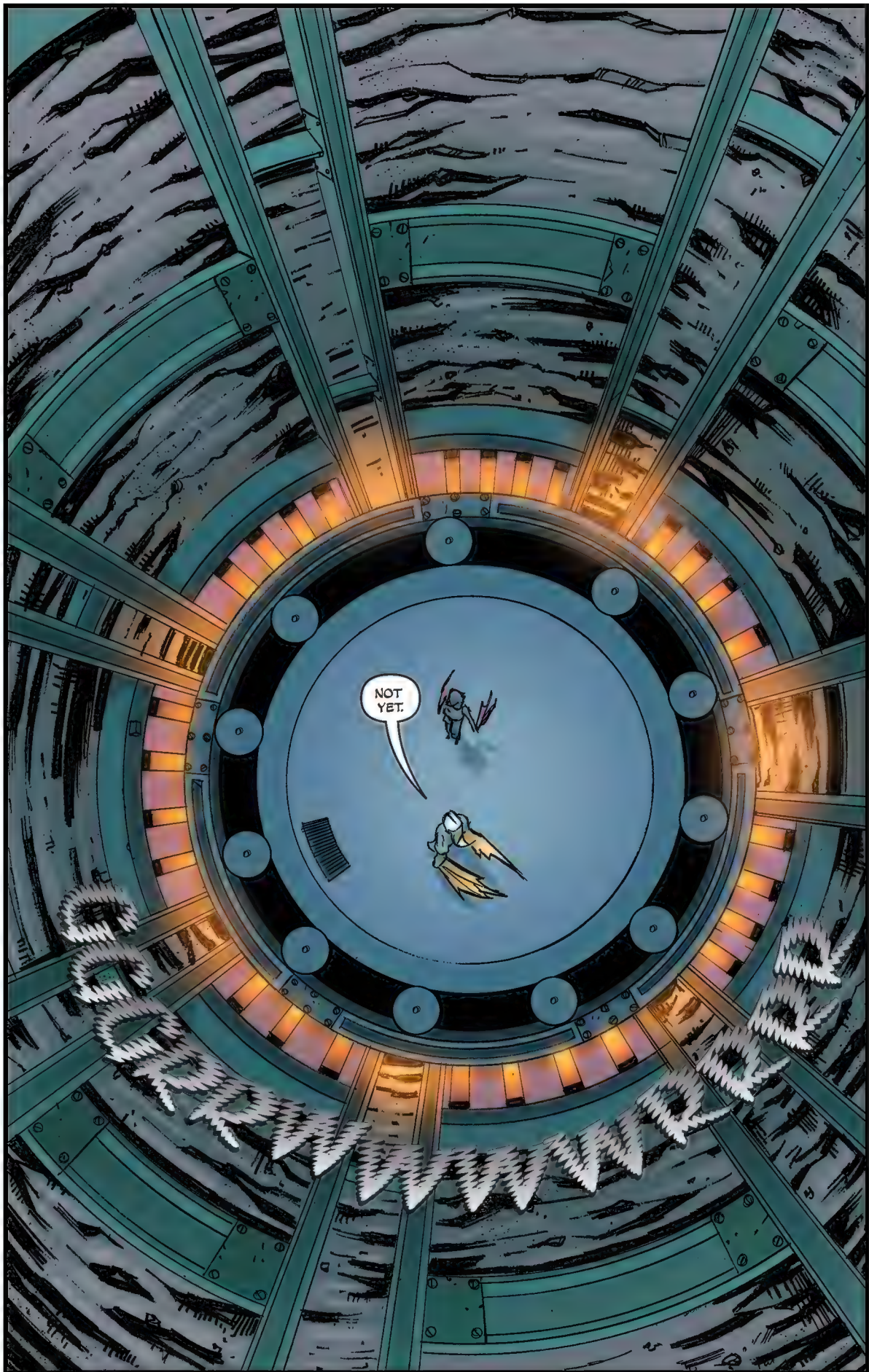
I DID INDEED.



WE MUST BURN THAT BRIDGE TO TECHNOLOGY IN ORDER TO MOVE FORWARD, BUT NOT UNTIL WE HAVE FULLY CROSSED IT.



WE ARE CLOSE, BUT WE HAVE NOT REACHED THE END, VANYSS.





I'M TELLING YOU, WE'RE NOT LOST. WE'RE ON A TRAIL.

DUDE, JUST BRING UP YOUR GPS.

NO WAY. THAT'S CHEATING. WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE OFF THE GRID. REMEMBER? LIVE IN THE MOMENT.

WHATEVER, MAN.



WHOA. CHECK IT OUT.



WHAT IS THAT? A BIRD?

HAS TO BE THE BIGGEST BIRD I EVER SAW.



LET ME ZOOM IN. MAYBE I CAN GET A BETTER LOOK.

UM... DUDE.



THAT AIN'T NO BIRD.

RUN!!!

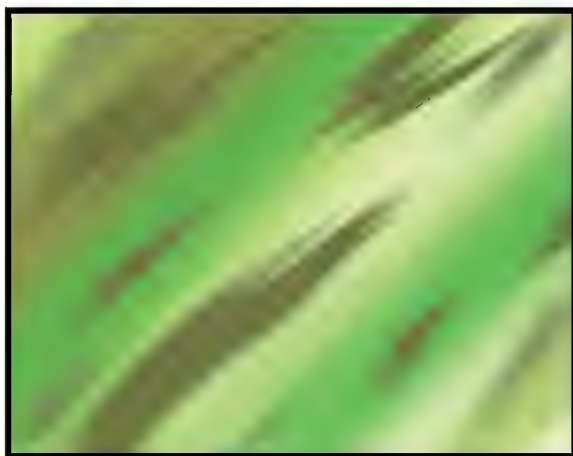


WHAT THE HELL IS THAT THING, MAN?!

I DON'T KNOW. JUST KEEP MOVING!



DUDE! LOOK WHERE YOU'RE GOOOOO--





I HAVE
SO MANY
QUESTIONS.
FIRST OFF...

WHICH ONE
OF YOU IS
DUDE, AND
WHICH ONE
IS MAN?



HUH?

WHAT?

MY NAME
IS *MADIX*.

UNITED
STATES MILITARY,
IN CASE YOU
COULDN'T TELL.



LOOK, UM, SIR...WE DIDN'T KNOW
WE WERE TRESPASSING ON ANY
GOVERNMENT LAND. THERE
WEREN'T NO SIGNS OR
FENCING OR NOTHING.

WE DIDN'T
MEAN TO SEE
WHAT WE SAW, AND
WE WON'T TELL A
SOUL ABOUT IT.
PROMISE.

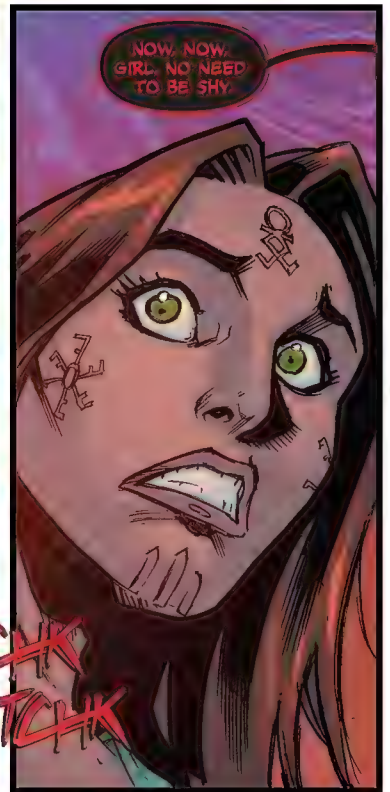
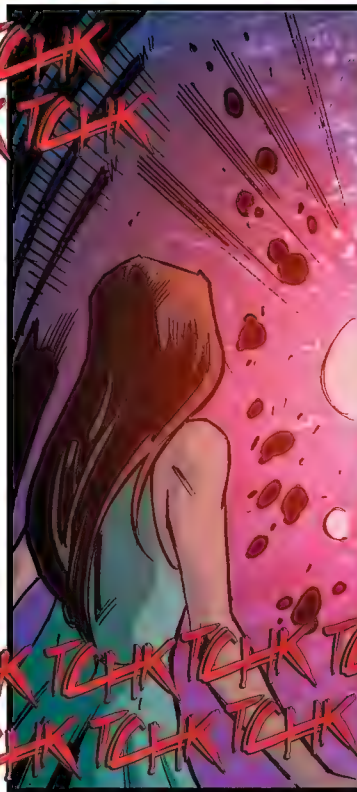
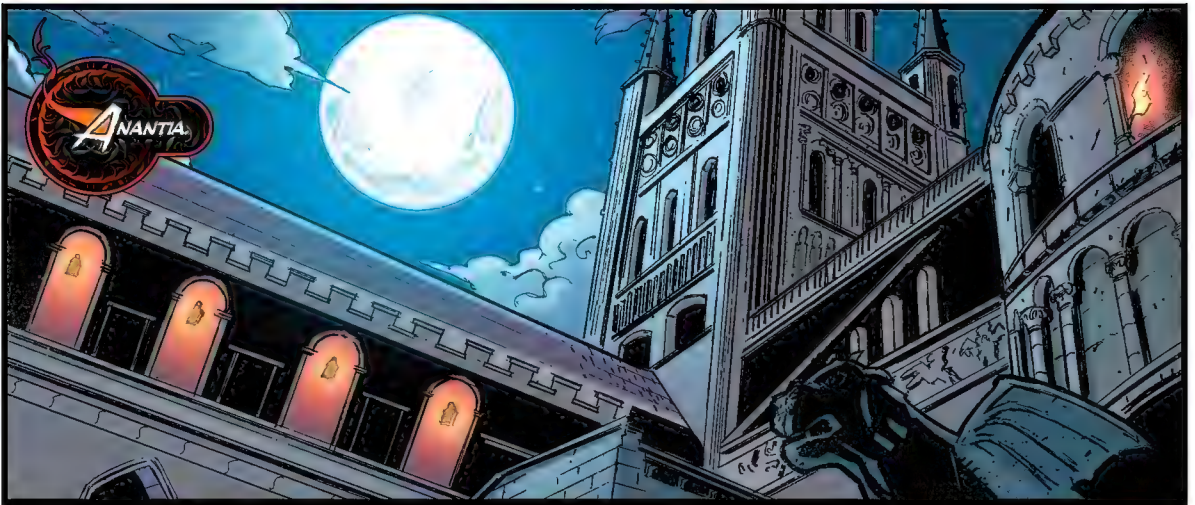
RIGHT, MAP
I GOT SAID
IT WAS PART
OF THE
NATIONAL
PARK. WE
WOULDN'T DREAM
OF BREAKING
ANY LAWS, SIR.
YOU GOTTA
BELIEVE US.

IN THE VIDEO YOU SAID
YOU TURNED OFF YOUR
GPS. WHERE EXACTLY WERE
YOU WHEN YOU SHOT
THAT VIDEO?



WYOMING,
SIR.

WYOMING,
HUH? LET
ME GUESS.
DEVIL'S
TOWER?





WHAT
ARE
THEY?

TCHK
TCHK

THOSE WHO
HAVE GIVEN
THEMSELVES OVER
TO THE POWER
OF SHADOW
MAGIC, BODY
AND SOUL

SERVANTS
TO A HIGHER
CALLING

YOU HEAR IT
TOO, DON'T YOU,
EVAN? A SENSE DEEP
WITHIN YOURSELF, SOMETHING
FINAL THAT HARKENS BACK
TO A TIME LONG AGO.
YOUR HERITAGE.
YOUR TRUTH.

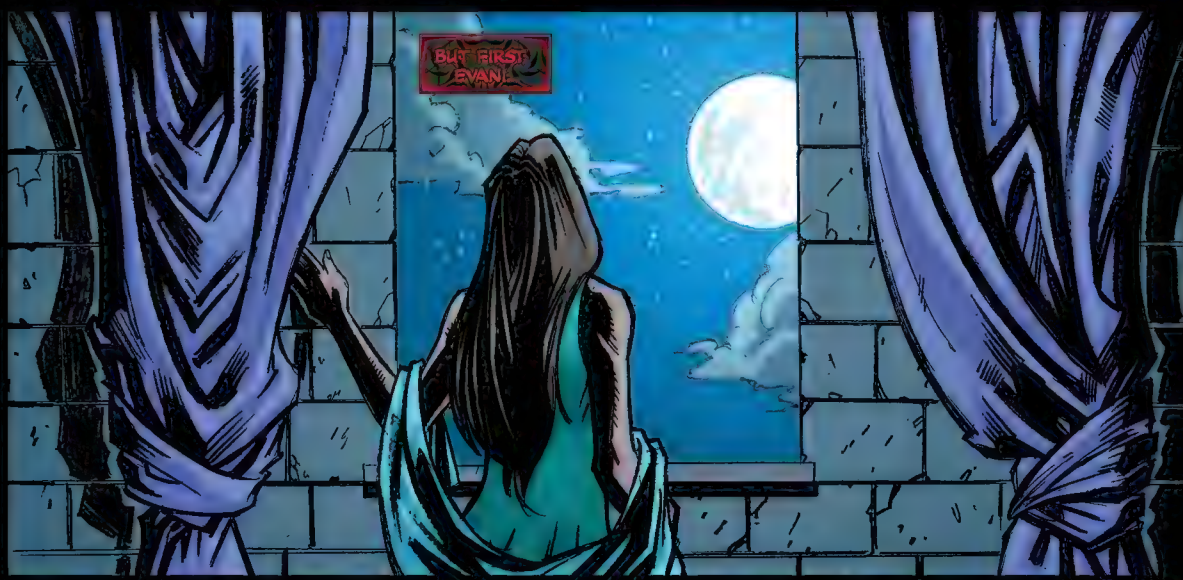
YOUR
DESTINY.

THIS IS
JUST A
DREAM.

YOU DON'T
BELIEVE THAT EVEN
WHEN YOU ARE AWAKE, YOU
HEAR MY VOICE WHISPERING IN THE
BACK OF YOUR MIND, REACHING
OUT TO YOU, YOU CANNOT
IGNORE ME, AND DO
YOU WISH TO.

WE STAND AT
THE PRECIPICE, ONLY
THROUGH STRENGTH AND
RESOLVE CAN WE TAKE
FLIGHT AND SOAR, BEING
OURSELVES TO THE
MOUNTAINTOP.

ONE BUILT OF
THE BODIES OF OUR
SHAMANS, OUR POWER
HAS NEVER BEEN
GREATER. WE MUST
STRIKE NOW.





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VOL. 7

COVER A

MICHAEL TURNER'S
SOULFIRE

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Cover B

SOULFIRE

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Donny
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MICHAEL SOULFIRE™

**"DIGGING
DEEP"**

Volume Seven **PART 7 of 8**

Written by:

**J.T.
Krul**

In 2003, to mark the launch of its new publishing studio, Aspen Comics' Michael Turner put pencil to paper and went about creating a whole new world—a source of light in a dark world, a source of light in a dark world, a source of dark in a moral gray world, a mechanical dragon, and a source of power in the form of a seemingly ordinary boy who is anything but. Quickly joining the mega-hit Fathom, Soulfire has become one of Aspen's flagship properties, still going strong fifteen years later.

In Barcelona, Spain, Malikai dealt with the fallout from the explosion that forced Sonia into a comatose state. Meanwhile, Grace used more forceful measures to find out answers about Janus from their captive, Mie. In the kingdom of magic, Evani was haunted by dreams that felt all too real as she learned of her presumed fate by Onyx to become the new Queen of The Everlands...

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Zen



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SOULFIRE CREATED BY MICHAEL TURNER

FOR ASPEN: Founder: MICHAEL TURNER Co-Owner: PETER STEIGERWALD Co-Owner/President: FRANK MASTROMAURO
Vice President/Editor in Chief: VINCE HERNANDEZ Vice President/Design and Production: MARK ROSLAN Editor: GABE CARRASCO
Marketing Assistant: CORINNE CHUAH Production Assistant: JUSTIN VANCHEO Office Manager: MEGAN SHIRK AspenStore.com: CHRIS RUPP

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WHAT DID
YOU DO,
GRACE?!

I GOT
ANSWERS.

BY
TORTURING
HER?

SHE COULD
HAVE STOPPED IT AT
ANY TIME. SHE CHOSE
THE EXTENT OF HER
INJURIES WITH
HER SILENCE.



YOU USED
MAGIC TO
DO THIS?



YOU DARE
ACCUSE ME OF
SOME SORT OF
BLASPHEMY OR
DEGRADATION OF
THE MAGIC--

WHEN IT IS
JANUS AND HIS
WARRIORS WHO HAVE
REPEATEDLY SULLIED
THE PURITY OF
MAGIC THROUGH
MANIPULATION.

THROUGH
TECHNOLOGY.



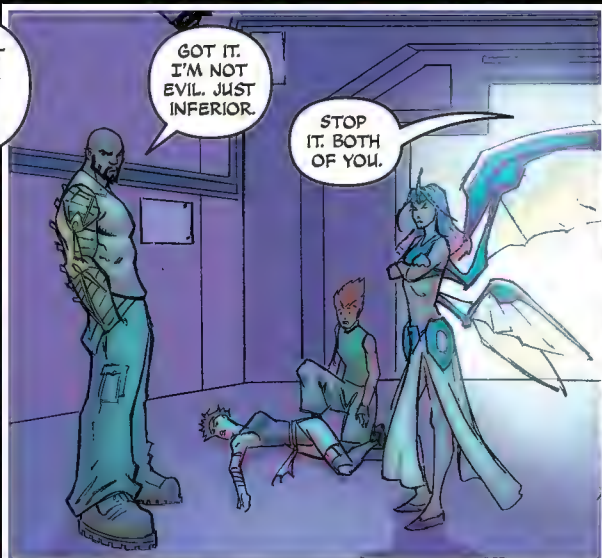
SO, TECHNOLOGY
IS EVIL? IS THAT
WHAT YOU ARE
SAYING, GRACE?

I AM
SAYING THAT
IT IS A POOR
SUBSTITUTE.
INFERIOR IN
EVERY WAY.



GOT IT.
I'M NOT
EVIL. JUST
INFERIOR.

STOP
IT. BOTH
OF YOU.





OUR FIGHT IS NOT WITH EACH OTHER. IT IS WITH JANUS.

HOW IS SONIA? STILL RESTING?

I KNOW. I'M SORRY.

NO. NOT RESTING, *BENOIST*. SHE IS IN A COMA. BIG DIFFERENCE.



WE'RE ALL SICK ABOUT SONIA'S CONDITION, *MAL*.

BUT, GRACE IS GETTING OUT OF CONTROL. LOOK WHAT SHE DID.

NO OFFENSE, *P.J.*, BUT YOU AREN'T CONNECTED TO THE MAGIC THE WAY GRACE AND I ARE. YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY UNDERSTAND THE GRAVITY OF THE SITUATION.

THIS WAS MY FAULT. I SHOULD HAVE NEVER GOTTEN SONIA ANYWHERE NEAR THIS. THIS ISN'T HER WORLD.



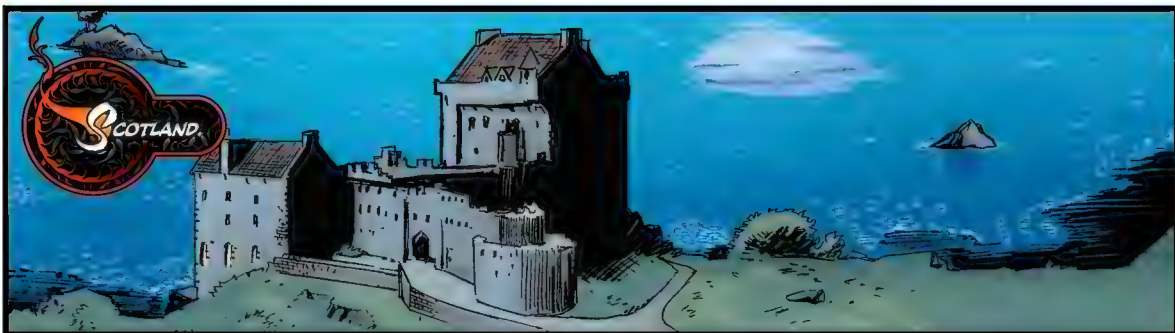
IF THIS IS THE PART WHERE YOU TELL US THAT THIS IS YOUR BATTLE-- YOURS AND GRACE'S. AND THAT, IT'S PROBABLY BEST IF WE STAYED BEHIND. SAVE YOUR BREATH.

DITTO FOR ME, BROTHER.

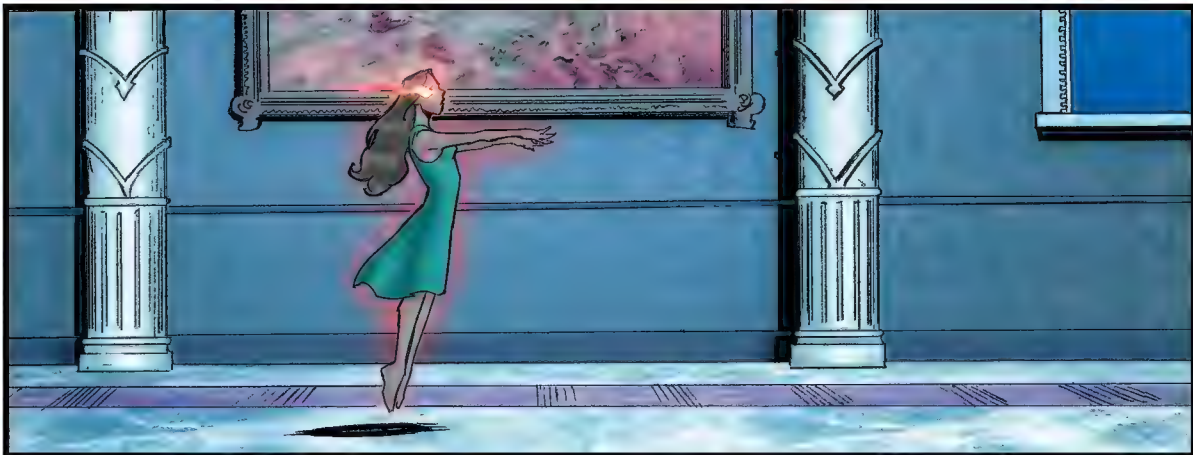
I'VE BEEN IN THIS FROM THE GET-GO. AND, I'LL BE DAMNED IF I'M GOING TO SIT ON THE SIDELINES, NOW.

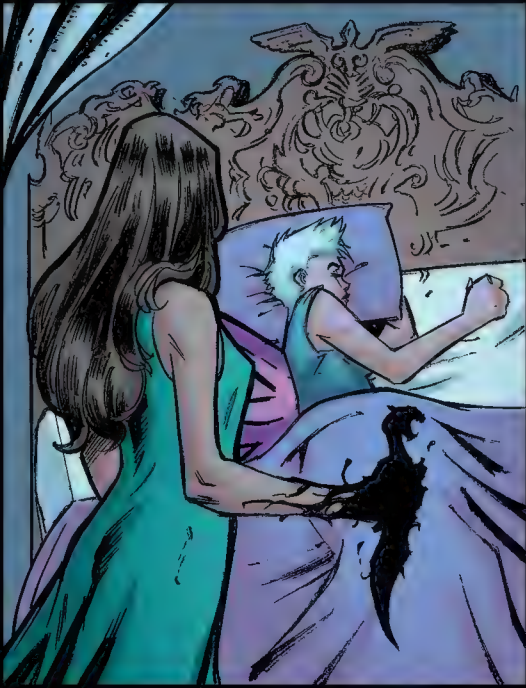
NO. I KNOW YOU BOTH BETTER THAN THAT. BUT, THIS TIME, MY FOCUS CANNOT BE ON KEEPING YOU SAFE.

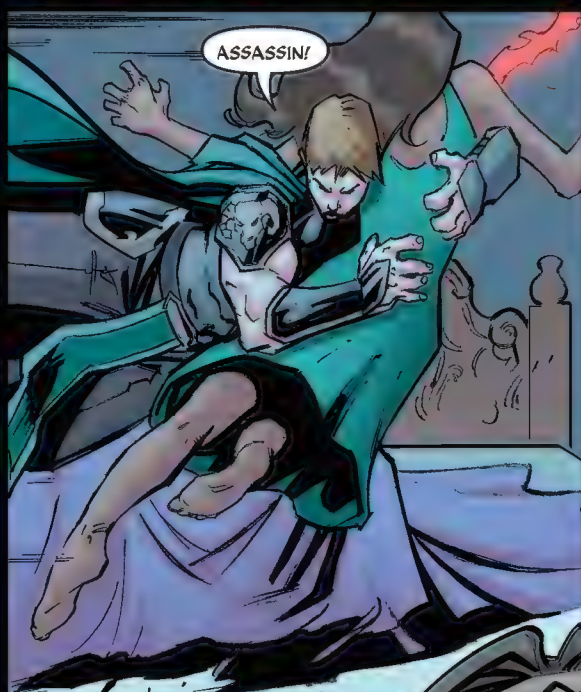
IT'S ABOUT PAYBACK.













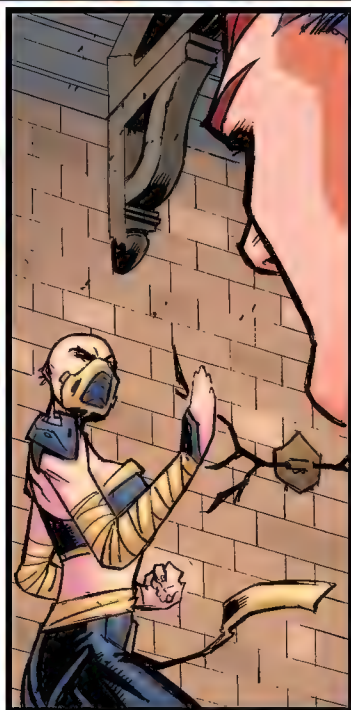


YOU GUYS
ARE STARTING TO
BECOME A REAL
NUISANCE.

THAT ALL?
WE'RE GOING
FOR PAIN IN
THE ASS.



GUESS
WE'LL JUST
HAVE TO UP
OUR GAME.



WHERE
IS MIE?

SHE
IS ALIVE, BUT
LEARNED NOT TO
CROSS ME THE
HARD WAY.

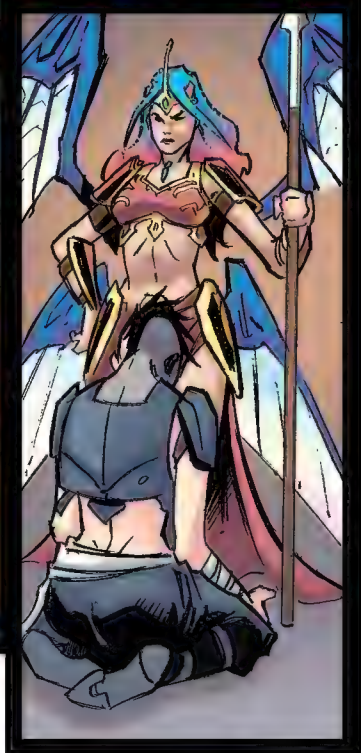
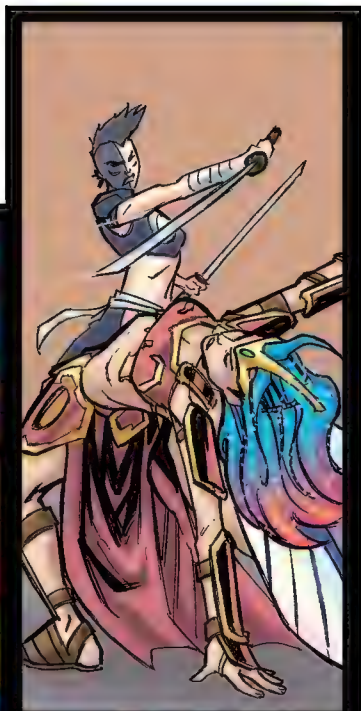
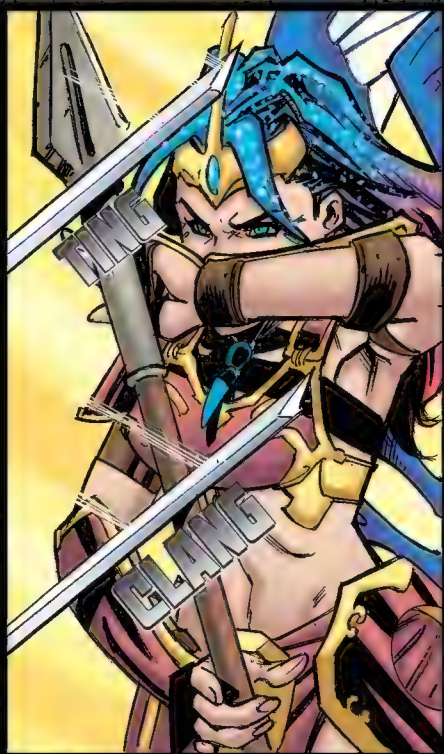
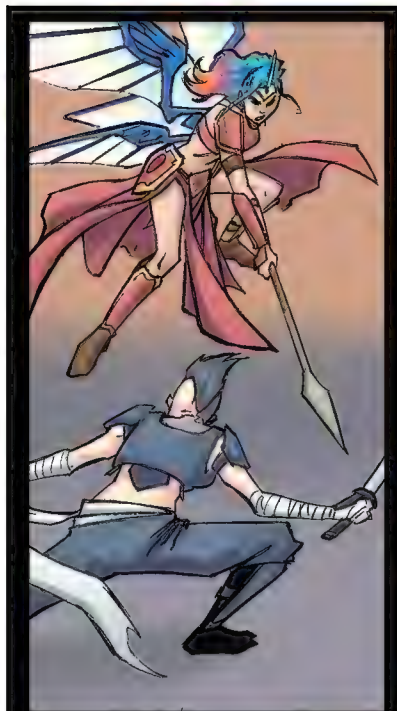
BIG TALK.
YOU MAGIC TYPES
ARE ALL THE SAME.
HIDING BEHIND YOUR
POWER. AFRAID TO
FIGHT FAIR.



IS THAT
HOW YOU
FOUGHT REN?
WHEN YOU
BETRAYED
HIM?

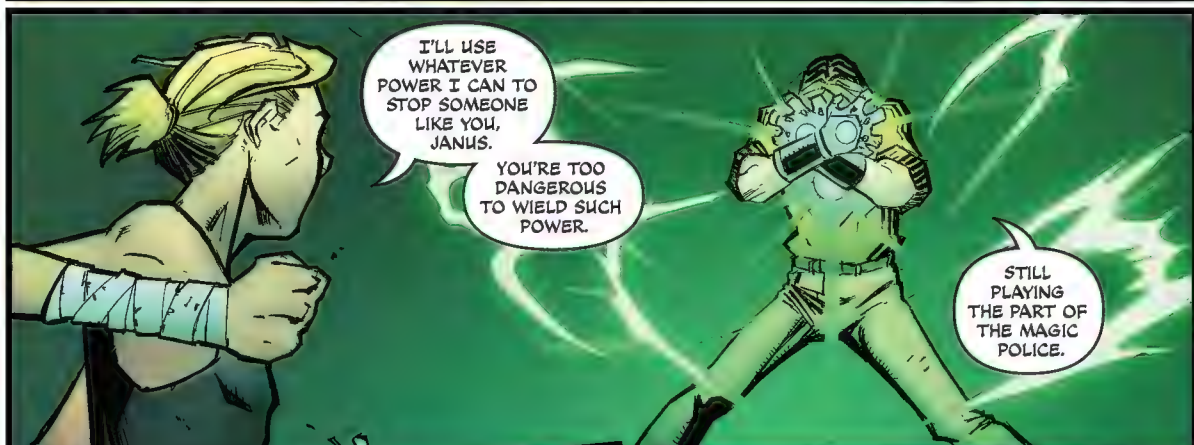
BUT, I
SEE YOUR
POINT.

AND, I AM
MORE THAN
CAPABLE OF
SHOWING YOU
MINE.





THAT TECH
LOOKS FAMILIAR.
SEEMS YOU ARE
NOT AS PURE AS
YOU THOUGHT.



I'LL USE
WHATEVER
POWER I CAN TO
STOP SOMEONE
LIKE YOU,
JANUS.

YOU'RE TOO
DANGEROUS
TO WIELD SUCH
POWER.

STILL
PLAYING
THE PART OF
THE MAGIC
POLICE.



WHEN WILL
YOU LEARN--
YOU HAVE NO
AUTHORITY
OVER ME.



P.J.,
YOU
OKAY?

JUST PEACHY.
WHICH IS MORE THAN
I CAN SAY FOR JANUS
ONCE THEY CATCH
UP TO HIM.



IT'S OVER, JANUS. YOU CANNOT GET AWAY THIS TIME.



OMMMF.

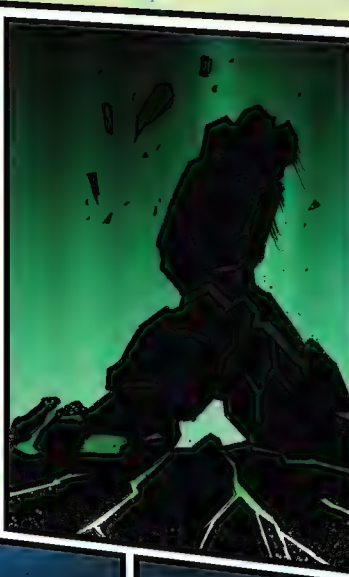


GET AWAY?

WHAT? YOU THINK I AM RUNNING AWAY FROM YOU, MALIKAI?

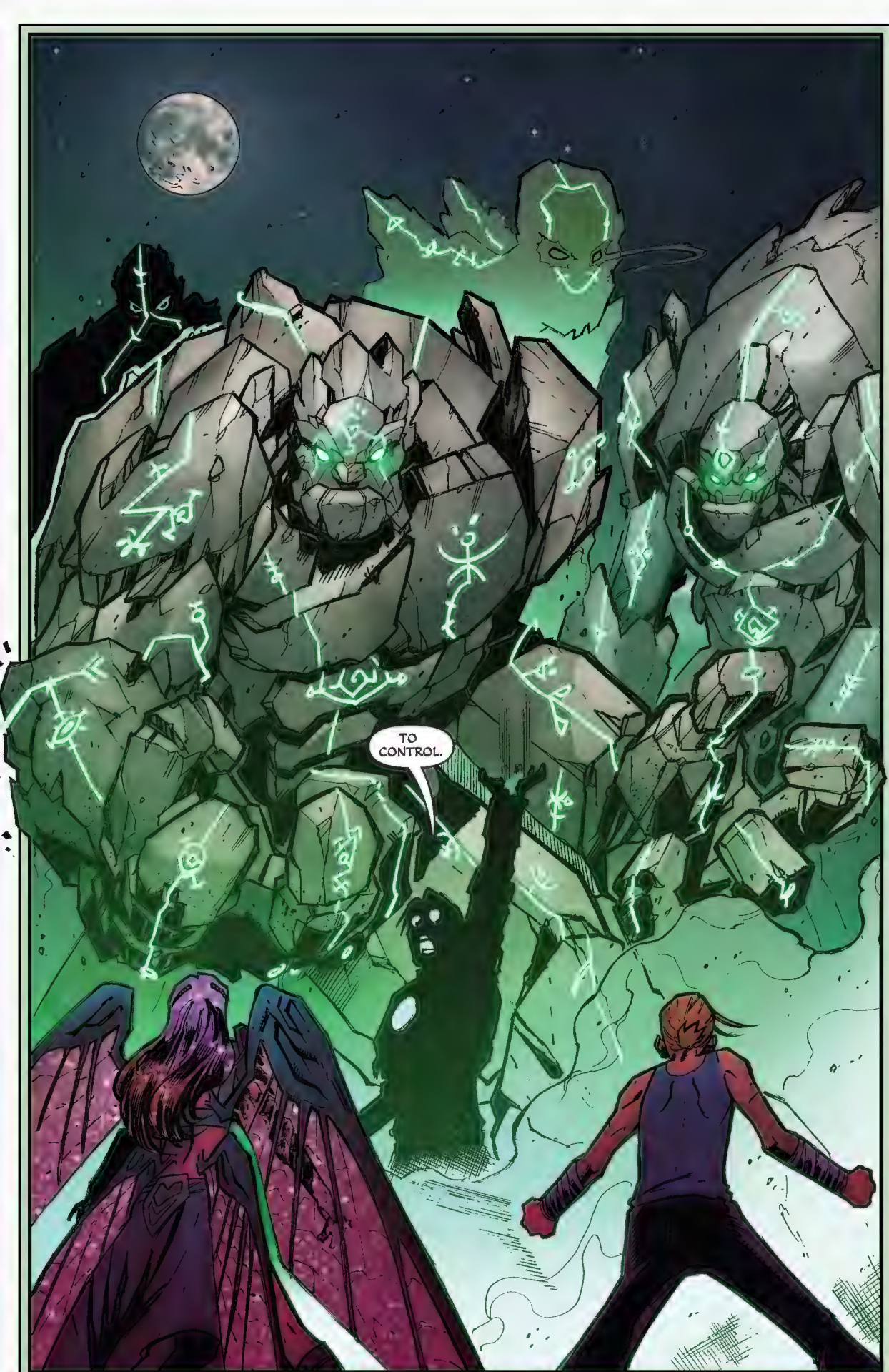


ON THE CONTRARY, I AM RUNNING **TOWARD** SOMETHING.



THIS...THIS
IS SOME KIND
OF TERRIBLE
MANIPULATION.

MANIPULATION?
YOU SAY THAT LIKE IT'S
A BAD THING. WHAT IS THE
MAGIC AFTER ALL, IF NOT
SOMETHING FOR US TO
WIELD. TO SHAPE.







YOU GOT
INCOMING.



LAST
TIME, YOU
KEPT US
ON THE
RUN.

BUT, I'M
NOT THE
SAME SCARED
KID I WAS
BEFORE.



IN
CASE YOU
COULDN'T
TELL.



HANG--
NNNNH-- ON.
I GOT YOU.
SORT OF.

...DIDN'T
THINK THIS
IS WHAT YOU
HAD IN MIND,
CASSIDY.



HEY, I'M
JUST TRYING
TO MINIMIZE THE
DAMAGE-- FOR
EVERYONE.



YOU KNOW
HOW PEOPLE
BECOME
MARTYRS,
RIGHT?

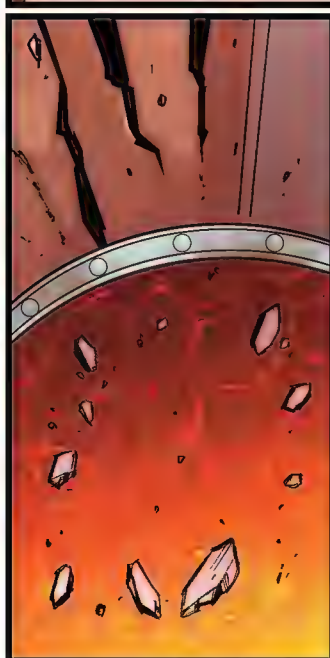
THEY
DIE.



THANKS,
LILY. SO,
SUPPORTIVE,
AS ALWAYS.
COME ON.

COME
ON? TO DO
WHAT?

TO KEEP
THIS FROM
GETTING OUT
OF HAND...







MORE LIKE A
HELLHOLE.

TO BE
CONTINUED



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MICHAEL SOULFIRE™

"BREAKTHROUGH"

Volume Seven **PART 8 of 8**

Written by:

**J.T.
Krul**

In 2003, to mark the launch of his new publishing studio, Aspen Comics, Michael Turner put pencil to paper and went about creating a whole new world—a source of light in a strong female warrior, a source of dark in a monstrous mechanical dragon, and a source of power in the form of a seemingly ordinary boy who is anything but. Quickly joining the mega-hit Fathom, Soulfire has become one of Aspen's flagship properties, still going strong fifteen years later.

The group begins to worry about Grace's emotional wellbeing, after she tortured Mie to gain information about Janus. But, they had little time to gather their thoughts, as they headed to Scotland to confront him once and for all. However, the tech and magic expert had a special surprise waiting for them—massive golems of stone and magic. Meanwhile, in Devil's Tower, Wyoming, Rainier summoned his own creatures of might—giant raging dragons made of fire and brimstone...

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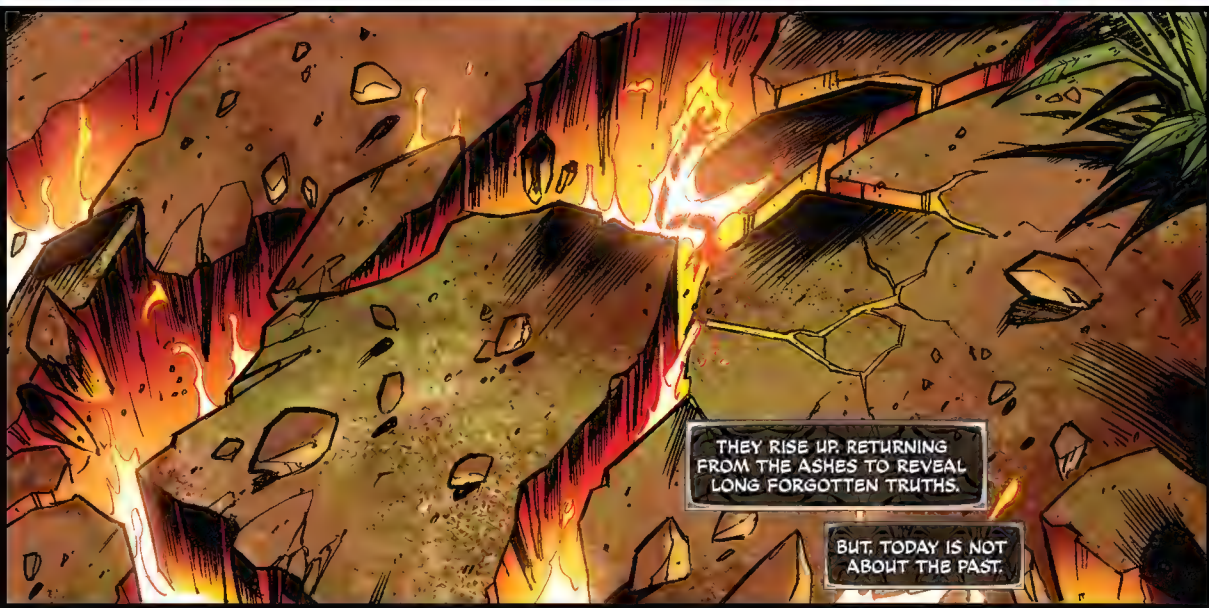


LIFETIMES HAVE BEEN SPENT
STUDYING HISTORY. SIFTING
THROUGH THE DUST AND DIRT
TO LEARN THE TRUE ORIGINS OF
OUR WORLD AND OUR UNIVERSE.

IT CAN BE A RATHER PASSIVE
ACT AS THE CLUES LIE DORMANT
UNTIL CURIOUS MINDS DIG DEEP
ENOUGH TO DISCOVER THEM.



BUT SOME ANSWERS DON'T
WAIT TO BE UNEARTHED.

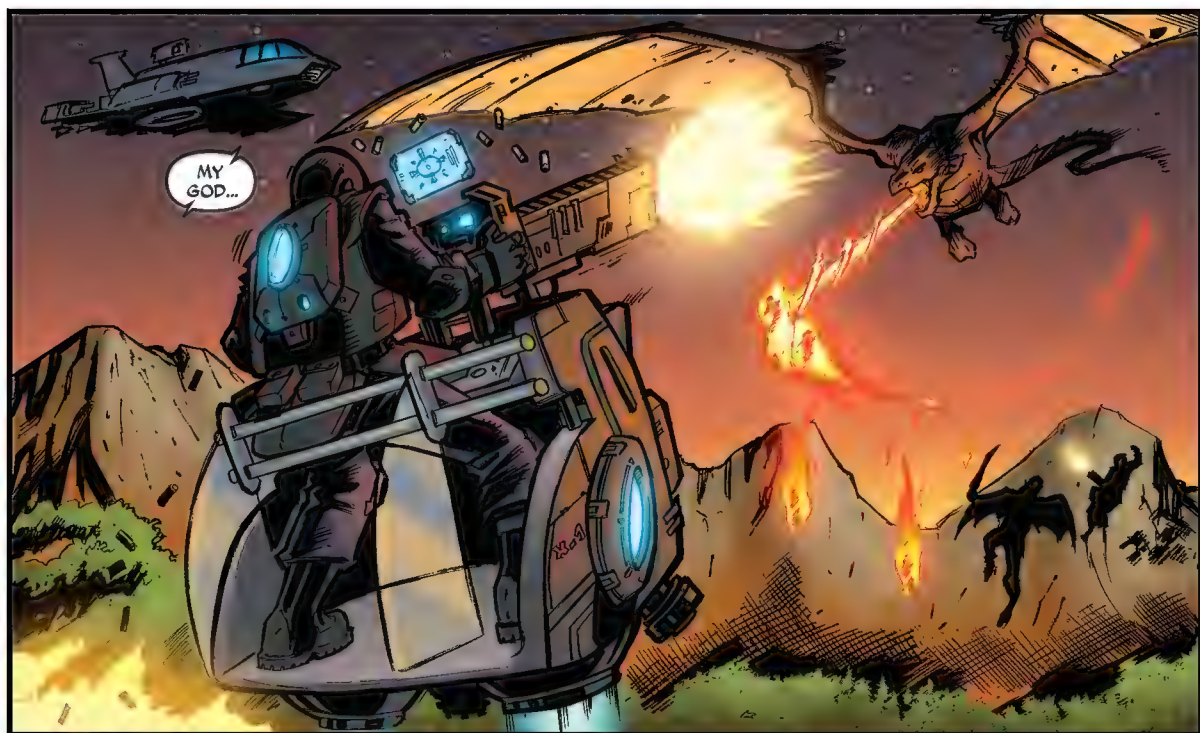


THEY RISE UP, RETURNING
FROM THE ASHES TO REVEAL
LONG FORGOTTEN TRUTHS.

BUT, TODAY IS NOT
ABOUT THE PAST.

IT IS ABOUT
THE FUTURE.







IT'S SO...SO HORRIBLE.

STILL A COUPLE OF STRAGGLERS LEFT.

SHOULD WE HUNT THEM DOWN? FINISH THEM OFF?



NO NEED, LILY. IT'S OVER.

OVER? ARE YOU KIDDING ME, MILO? THIS IS ONLY GOING TO GET WORSE. WE NEED TO LEAVE.

WE DON'T BELONG HERE, MILO, YOU DON'T BELONG HERE.



MAYBE, YOU DON'T, *CASSIDY*. BUT, I DO. THIS MAY BE THE ONLY PLACE I DO BELONG.

THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT? TO BE A KILLER?

BETTER THAN BEING A VICTIM.

YOU CAN'T MEAN THAT.

DON'T BE MAD AT HIM, *CASSIDY*. OR ME.



WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

I'M STAYING, TOO.

LILY, THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF SOMETHING REALLY BAD. THEY'LL BE BACK. THINGS WILL ESCALATE. MORE VIOLENCE. MORE DEATH. THIS ISN'T A HOME FOR US. IT'S HELL.

I KNOW. BUT, WE WANT DIFFERENT THINGS, *CASSIDY*. YOU WANT TO LIVE YOUR LIFE. BE LEFT ALONE. BE NORMAL. YOU WANT A HOME. NOT ME. I WANT SOMETHING ELSE. PAYBACK.

SO, THAT'S IT THEN?

ALMOST.

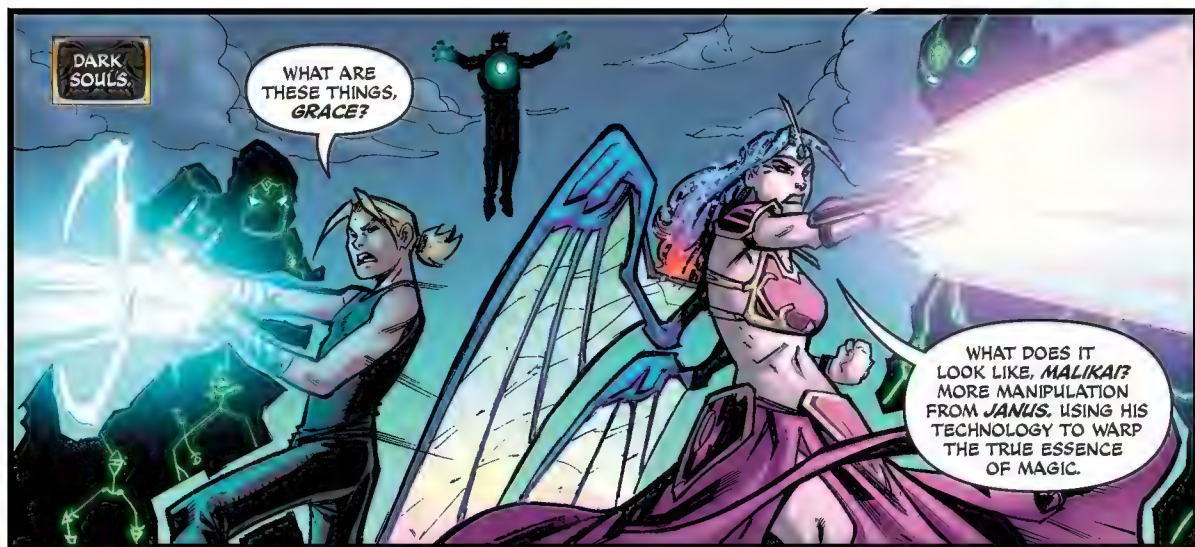




MAGIC IS PURE. AN
ENERGY OF LIFE.

ALMOST ELEMENTAL.
LIKE WATER, OR FIRE.

IT ONLY BECOMES
A SOURCE OF
DESTRUCTION AT
THE HANDS OF
WEAKER SPIRITS.



WHAT ARE THESE THINGS, *GRACE*?

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE, *MALIKA*? MORE MANIPULATION FROM *JANUS*. USING HIS TECHNOLOGY TO WARP THE TRUE ESSENCE OF MAGIC.



WELL, AT LEAST WE CAN FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE.



OMFFFF.



THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THESE CREATURES. I'VE FOUGHT MINDLESS BEASTS BEFORE, BUT THERE IS MORE THAN INSTINCT AT WORK HERE.

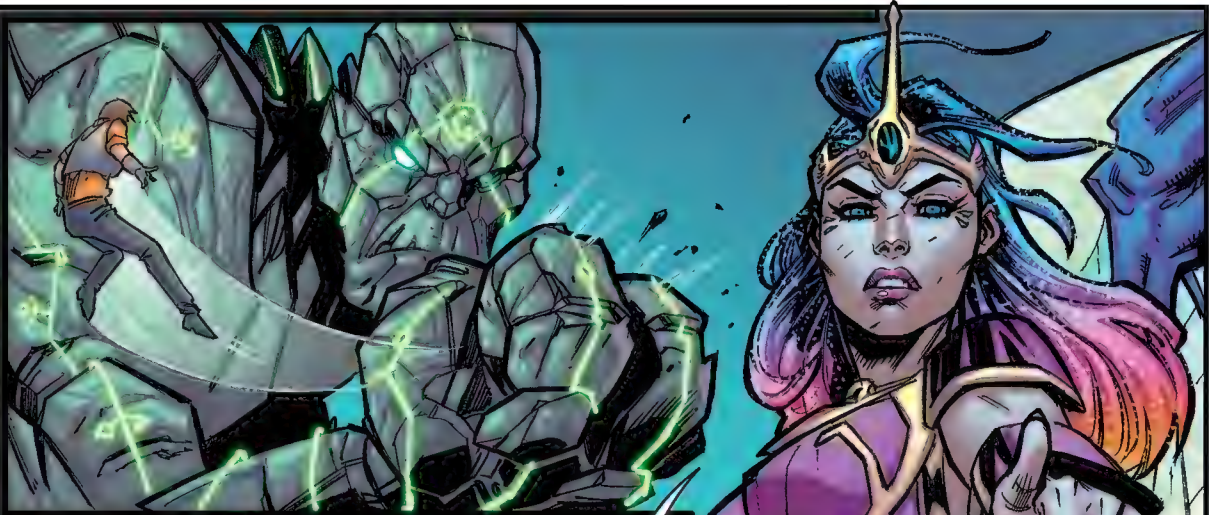
IMPRESSED, *GRACE*?

BET YOU NEVER IMAGINED THE MAGIC COULD BE USED TO SUCH ENDEAVORS. JUST GOES TO SHOW YOUR LACK OF VISION.

TOO BAD. FOR YOU.



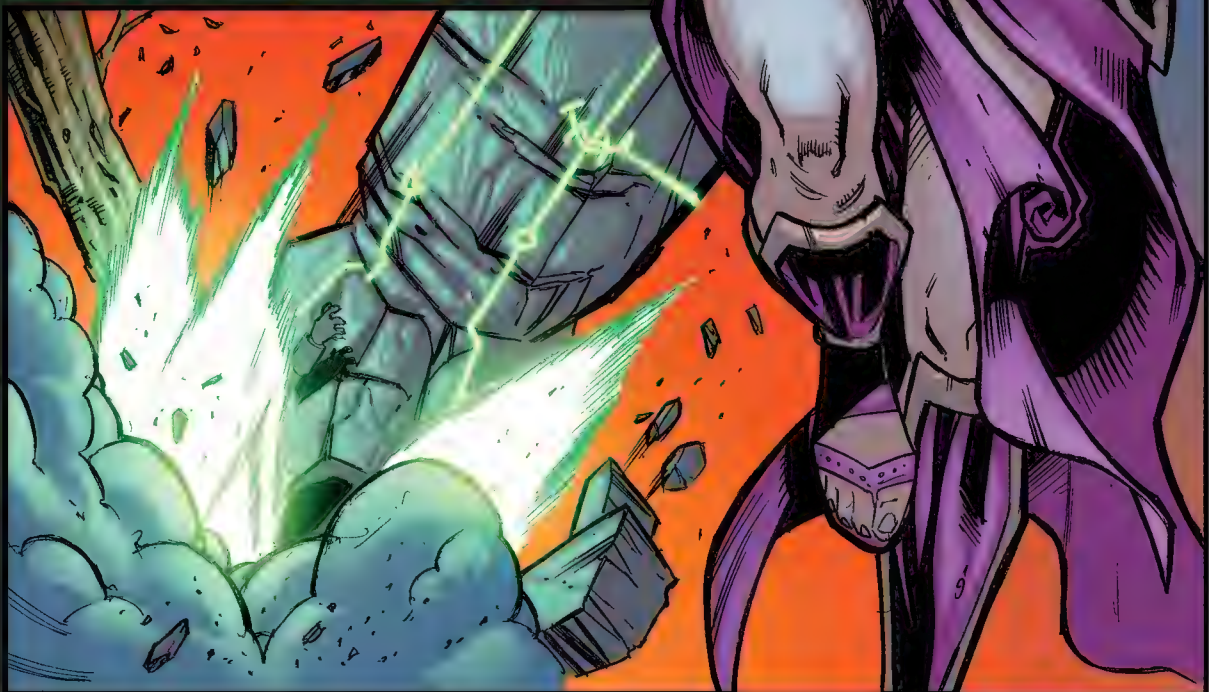
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? FOCUS.



WH-WHAT
ARE YOU DOING?
I MADE YOU.
YOU ARE MY
CREATION?!

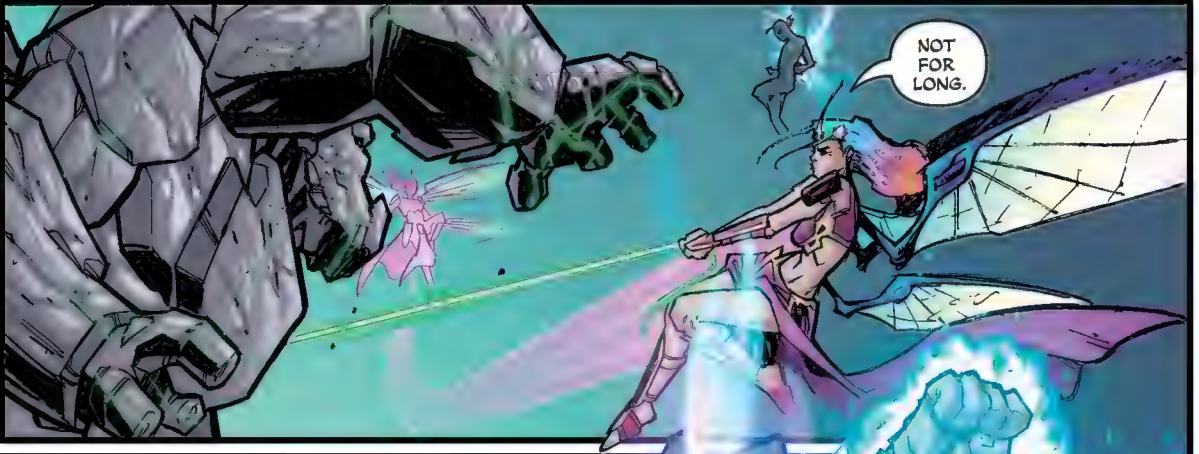
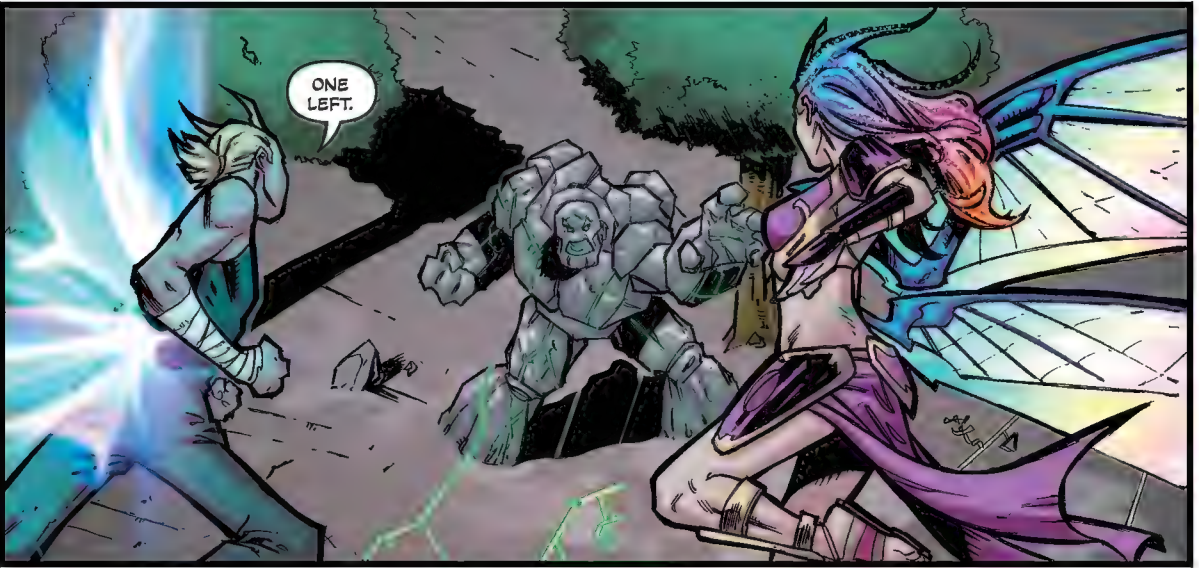
YOU MADE
THE SAME
MISTAKE MOST
DO-- YOU THINK
THE MAGIC IS
SOMETHING YOU
CAN POSSESS.
SOMETHING YOU
CAN CONTROL.

IT IS
NOT.











WE'RE LUCKY WE MANAGED TO STOP THEM. NO TELLING WHAT KIND OF CHAOS THOSE MONSTERS COULD HAVE UNLEASHED.

THOSE MONSTERS? JANUS IS THE REAL MONSTER, MALIKAI. HE IS THE ONE WHO SHOULD SUFFER SUCH A FATE.



YOU CAN'T MEAN...

YOU'RE NOT SAYING WE SHOULD MURDER HIM, ARE YOU?

IT'S NOT MURDER ON A BATTLEFIELD.

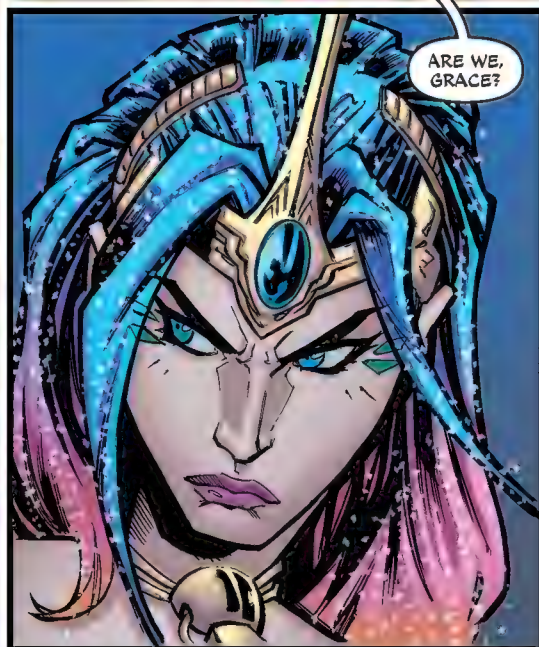
THE BATTLE IS OVER, GRACE.



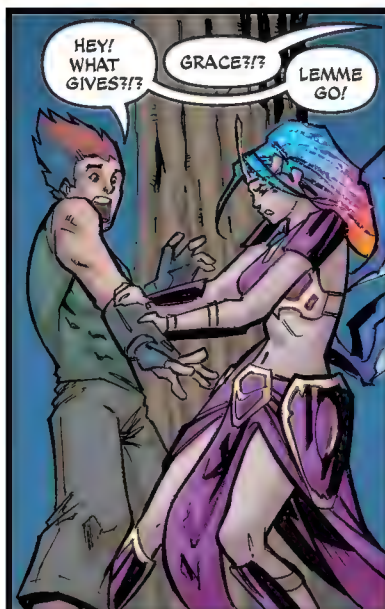
LOOKS LIKE WE MISSED ALL THE FIREWORKS.

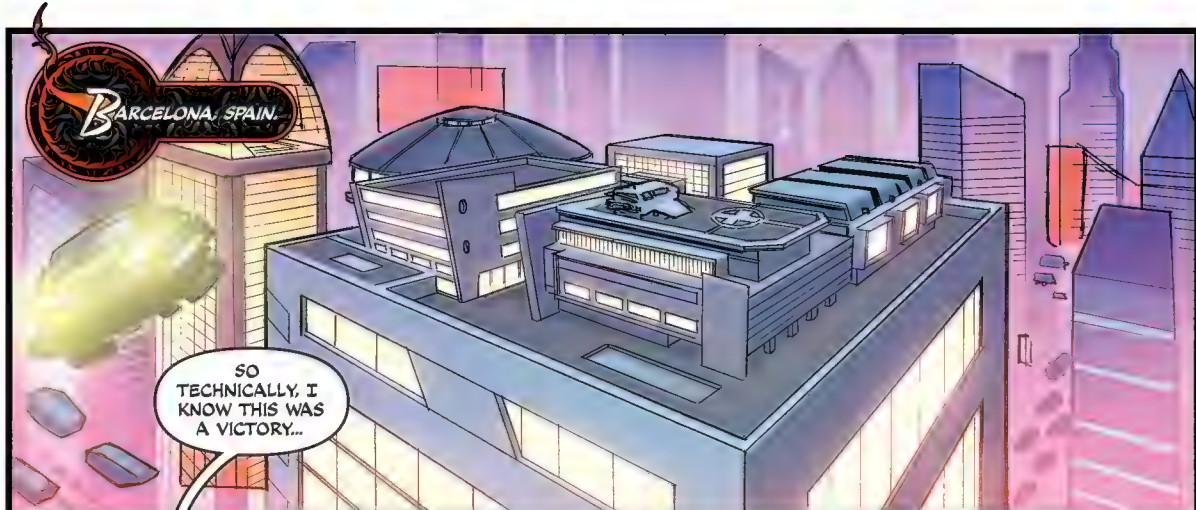
YOU GUYS, OKAY?

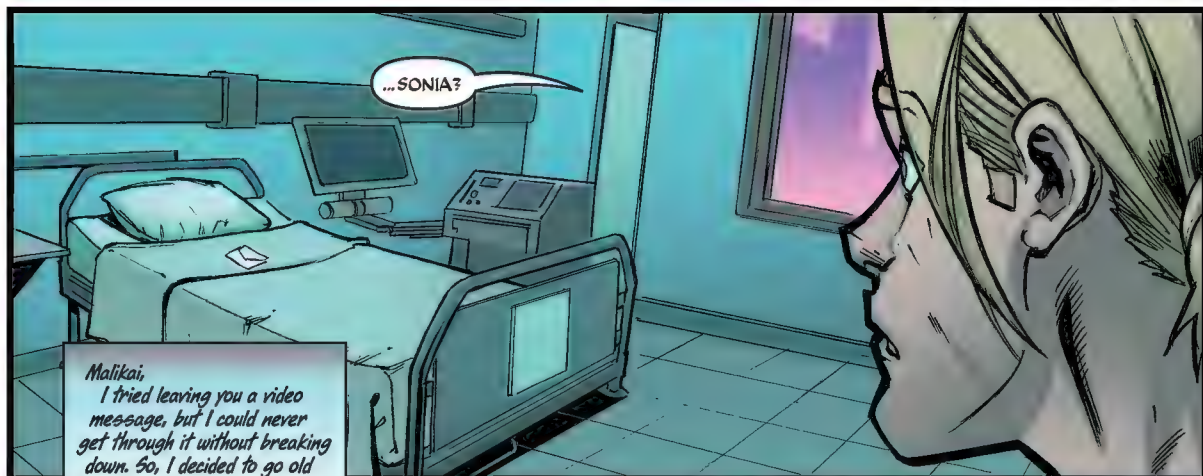
I DON'T KNOW.



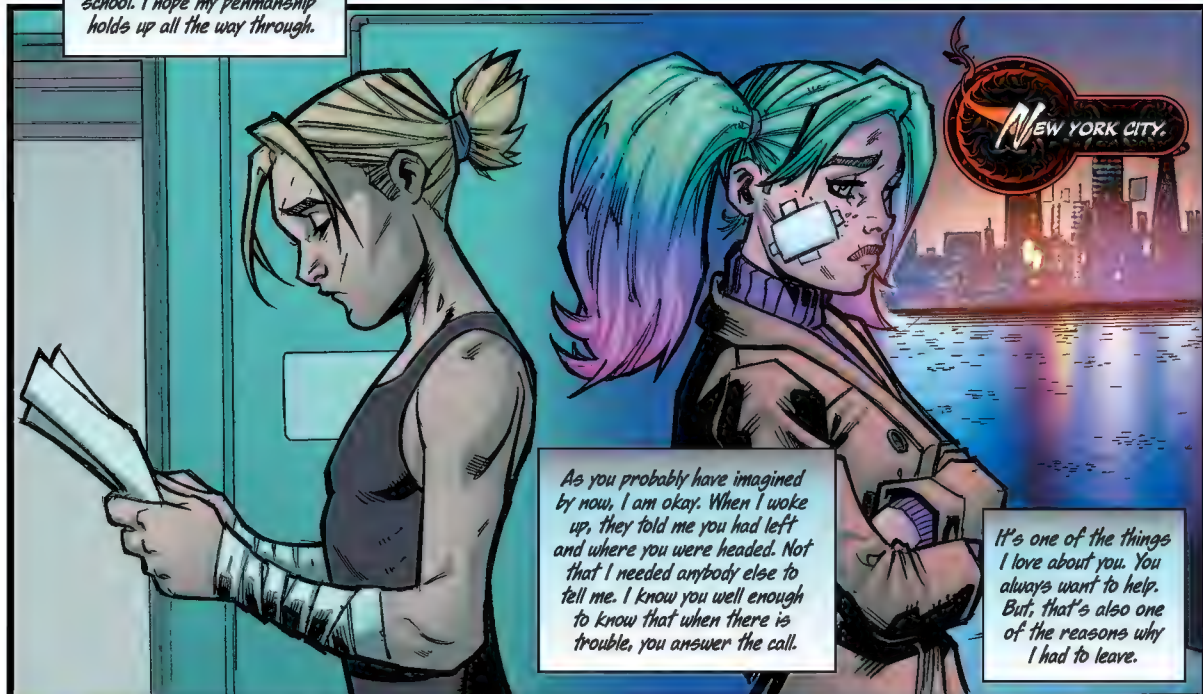
ARE WE, GRACE?





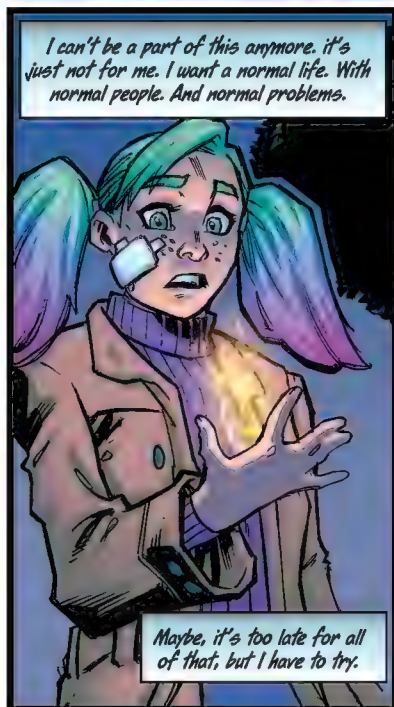


Malikai,
I tried leaving you a video
message, but I could never
get through it without breaking
down. So, I decided to go old
school. I hope my penmanship
holds up all the way through.



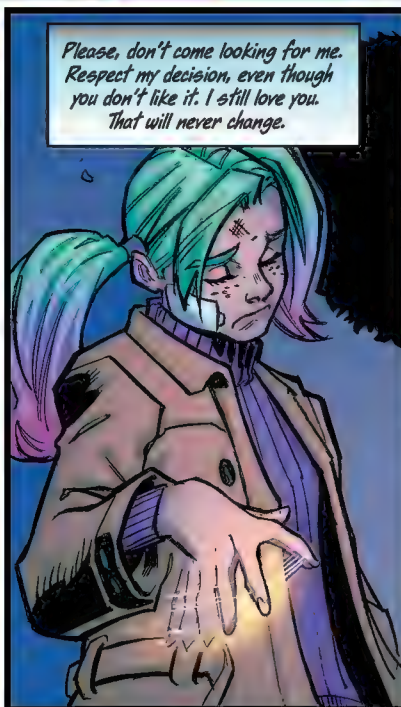
As you probably have imagined
by now, I am okay. When I woke
up, they told me you had left
and where you were headed. Not
that I needed anybody else to
tell me. I know you well enough
to know that when there is
trouble, you answer the call.

It's one of the things
I love about you. You
always want to help.
But, that's also one
of the reasons why
I had to leave.



I can't be a part of this anymore. it's
just not for me. I want a normal life. With
normal people. And normal problems.

Maybe, it's too late for all
of that, but I have to try.

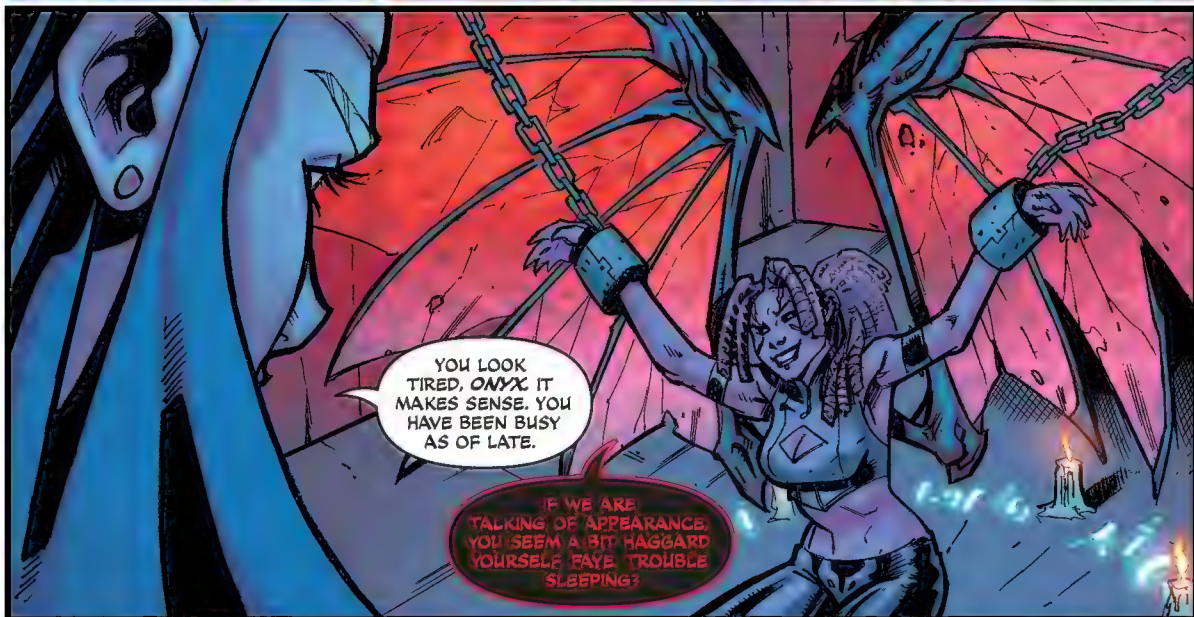


Please, don't come looking for me.
Respect my decision, even though
you don't like it. I still love you.
That will never change.



Unfortunately,
everything
else has.

I'm sorry.
Sonia





YOU KNOW
ME SO WELL,
OR DO YOU?

YES, I HAVE
BEEN A KILLER AND
AN ASSASSIN, AND THERE
WAS A TIME I WOULD HAVE
ENGAGED IN SUCH BEHAVIOR.
BUT I HAD NOTHING TO DO
WITH ANY ATTEMPT TO DO
ON YOUR LIFE.

AH,
TROUBLING,
ISN'T IT?

YOU
EXPECTED
MY DENIAL, BUT
YOU DID NOT EXPECT
TO BELIEVE ME
TRUTHFUL. BUT,
I AM.



WHICH MAKES
YOUR SITUATION
EVEN WORSE.

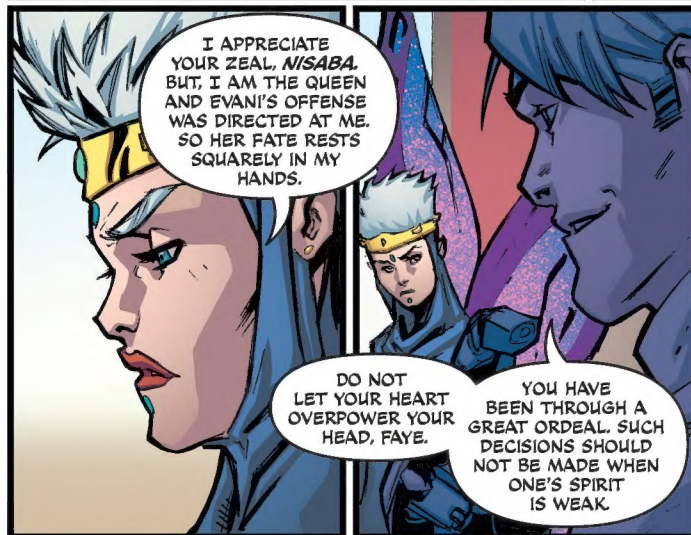
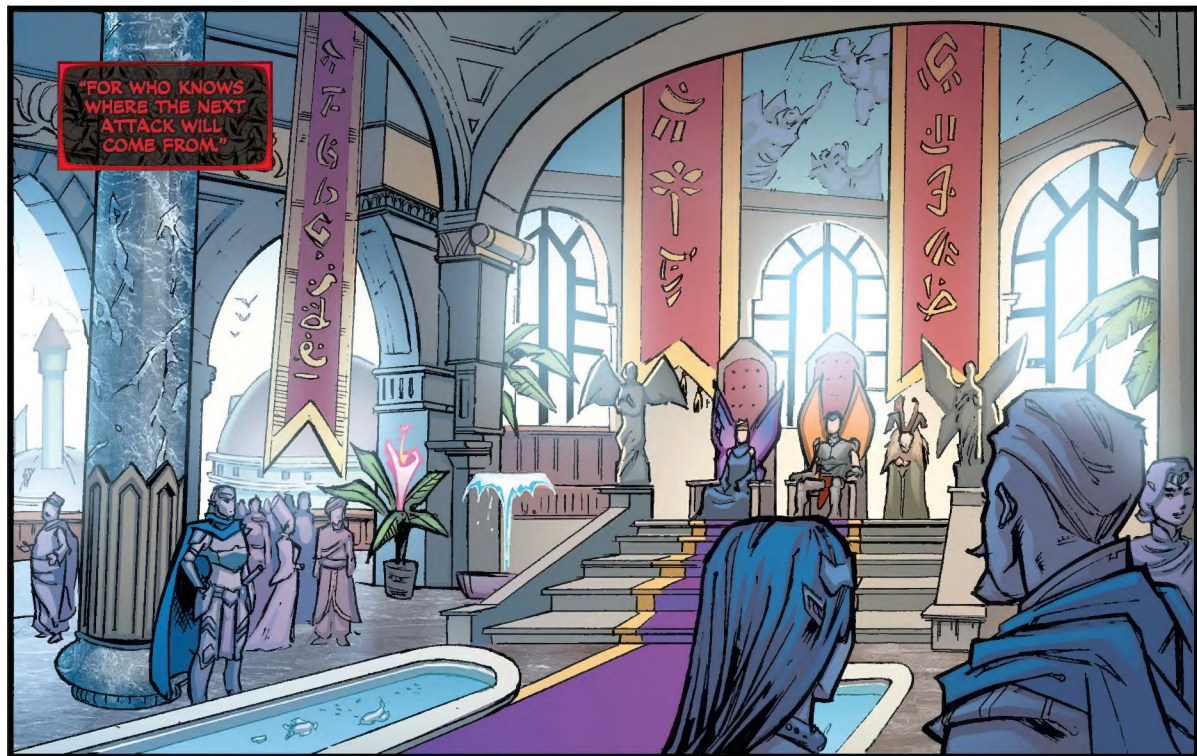
YOU HAVE
MORE ENEMIES
THAN YOU
THOUGHT.

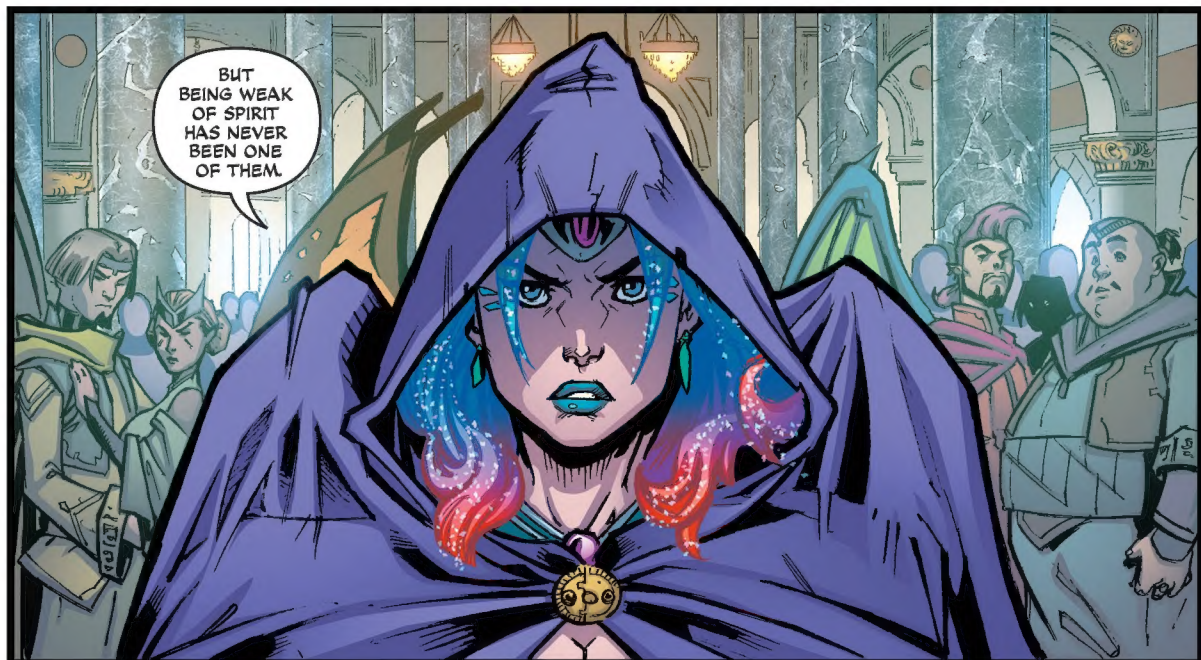


BEING
THE QUEEN
IS HARD.

BUT, THE
FALL FROM SUCH
STATURE CAN BE
EVEN HARDER.

TAKE
CARE,
FAYE.





BUT
BEING WEAK
OF SPIRIT
HAS NEVER
BEEN ONE
OF THEM.

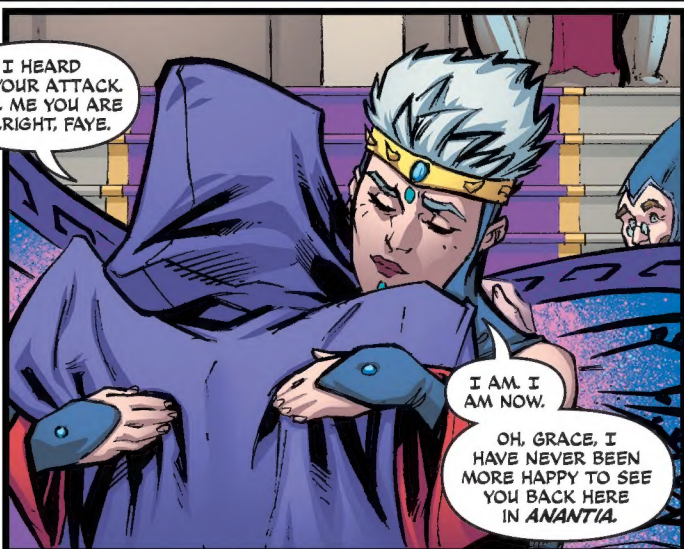


GRACE!

MY
QUEEN.

BY THE
GODS!

I HEARD
OF YOUR ATTACK.
TELL ME YOU ARE
ALRIGHT, FAYE.



I AM. I
AM NOW.

OH, GRACE, I
HAVE NEVER BEEN
MORE HAPPY TO SEE
YOU BACK HERE
IN ANANTIA.



YES, YES.
SUCH A JOY.



YOU MAY NOT
BE, MY QUEEN. I FEAR
A GREAT CONFLICT IS ON
THE HORIZON. ONE THAT
WILL SHAPE THE VERY
FUTURE OF THIS
WORLD.

WAR SEEMS
INEVITABLE.

HOW DO
YOU KNOW,
GRACE?

BECAUSE
I AM GOING TO
BE THE ONE TO
START IT.

THE
END.